



INDIAN WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

—
Edited by
RAJASHI GHOSH AND GARY N. MCLEAN

CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON
ASIAN WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP



Current Perspectives on Asian Women in Leadership

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Indian Women in Leadership

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1

Indian Women in Leadership: An Introduction

Rajashi Ghosh and Aindrila Chatterjee

While India has emerged as a global hub in the past few decades, women's empowerment and emancipation are still facing many barriers (Haq, 2013; Kaushik, Sharma, & Kaushik, 2014). Indian women who emerge as leaders in many domains do so after overcoming countless barriers posed by a patriarchal society. In this opening chapter, we provide an overview of how India's patriarchal society has portrayed women through the lens of religion and mythology and the nuances associated with those perceptions. We hope that, through this overview, you will understand better the contextual conditions that are unique to India and how they continue to shape the challenges experienced by women leaders in India. In the backdrop of this contextual

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understanding, we outline the 15 chapters in this book presented in four parts: barriers and challenges, signs of hope, sector perspectives, and international perspectives.

Women Indian Deities and Women's Leadership

The ancient religion of India is the *sanatan dharma* or Hinduism (Denton, 2012). Islam and Christianity came to India much later. Hence, most references to women in ancient India are from Hindu mythology and epics. Hinduism is rich in idol worship with many goddesses and demi-goddesses (who have some but not all of the powers of goddesses). They are still worshipped with reverence by men and women alike in different parts of India. A few include Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity; Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and arts; Santoshi Ma, the goddess of material or spiritual satisfaction; and Ma Manasa, the goddess of snakes, as a symbol of nature. The goddesses are all depicted as good looking but range in their degree of docility and demureness. Goddesses Durga and Kali are known for their strength and valor. They are the warrior goddesses and are known to have defeated evil spirits or demons when everyone else failed to do so. In terms of marital status, most are consorts of a god. While goddess Lakshmi is depicted as sitting at the feet of Lord Vishnu, her husband, Goddess Kali is seen to be standing on Lord Shiva, her husband, in a spate of rage. Her other form, Goddess Durga or Parvati, is seen beside Lord Shiva as equals. There is also the concept of *Ardhanarishvara*, a composite androgynous form of the Hindu god, Shiva, and his consort, Parvati (also known as Devi, Shakti, and Uma in this icon), depicted as half male and half female, split down the middle (Goldberg, 2002).

This brief description implies that Hinduism, in its original form, does not denigrate women. In fact, Hinduism has the strongest presence of the divine feminine among major world religions, from ancient times to the present (Bryant, 2007). The powerful women deities can serve as enabling role models for women contesting the notions of women subordination and obedience (Rajan, 1998). But, a closer look is needed to understand the influence of women goddesses in Indian society. Does ideological

promotion of women as divine entities through worship of female deities contribute to ordinary women's quest for gender equality and, hence, aspiration for leadership positions in India?

While there is no doubt that female goddesses legitimize women's ability to possess and exhibit power and may counteract banalization of women's leadership to some extent, it also implies that women can be leaders *only if* they are elevated to the status of divinity. There is evidence of a comparison of women political leaders in India, such as Indira Gandhi (late ex-Prime Minister of India) and Jayalalitha (late ex-Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, a state in South India), to powerful goddesses, such as Durga and Kali (Lama, 2001). This further underscores the point that women leaders in India need to be deemed super-human in order to escape typical criticisms (e.g., character assassination and poor judgment as a leader) that ordinary women face. This suggests that, although a few unconventional women may find legitimacy for their non-domestic leadership roles by referring to female deities in Indian society, the average Indian women do not necessarily benefit from the practice of goddess worship. The patriarchal society feels that women can be allowed to serve beyond their expected domestic roles if and only if they can be super humans and handle both responsibilities without the slightest flaw. To be able to attain the freedom of working outside the home, women have to be better than others to be able to earn respect. Furthermore, the practice of worshipping women as divine beings preserves the patriarchal system as then women need to be extra-cautious in protecting their honor in society because their honor as divine beings is considered sacred, which can be harmed if they are granted the freedom that is typical to ordinary humans (Rajan, 1998). This is evident in the Hindu hegemonic discourse noted in the following two quotes from Manusmriti, a highly revered holy text of Hinduism:

In the home where women are worshipped, there the Gods shower blessings. In the home where women are not worshipped, even virtuous deeds go unrewarded. (Laws of Manu III 56; Bühler, 1886)

Be a girl, be a young woman, or even be an aged one, nothing must be done independently by a woman, even in her own house. In childhood,

a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead, to her sons; a woman must never be independent. (Laws of Manu, V, 147–148; Bühler, 1886)

While these two quotes might appear to contradict each other (as one says that women are to be worshipped and the other states that women should never be allowed independence), a careful reading will show that the recognition of women's divine power through worship is justification for the patriarchal society's inclination to control women's independence (Erndl, 2000). The honor associated with the image of women as divine beings necessitates the additional sanctions on women's behavior in society as, otherwise, that honor might be lost. And so, the answer to the question of whether the cultural practice of worshipping female deities prevalent in Indian society is empowering to women needs to be a *cautious* "yes" (Erndl, 2000; Rajan, 1998), as women, aspiring for leadership roles, in a way, have to prove their divinity to be successful and respected in society.

Women in Indian Epics and Women Leadership

In two famous Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, we see quite diverse and conflicting views of the position of women, ranging from independence of thoughts and actions to limiting roles as an obedient daughter, housewife, and mother. For instance, *Panchakanya* is a group of five iconic heroines of Hindu epics, extolled in a hymn and whose names are believed to dispel sin when recited (Bhattacharya, 2004); Ahalya, Draupadi, Kunti, Tara, and Mandodari. Sometimes, Sita is considered as a *Panchakanya*, in the place of Kunti. Ahalya, Tara, Mandodari, and Sita are from the epic *Ramayana*; while as Draupadi and Kunti are from the *Mahabharata*.

Sita, the wife of King Rama of Ayodhya, is worshipped as an epitome of fidelity and sacrifice. She accompanied her husband to the forest when he was exiled for 14 years by his step-mother. During their stay, Sita was abducted by Ravana, the King of Lanka (present Sri Lanka). Although

Ravana developed a liking for Sita, she never allowed him to come near. A big battle was fought between Rama and Ravana, in which the former won, and Sita was rescued. Sita's chastity, however, was questioned multiple times by her husband, Rama, and his kingdom. Sita obeyed her husband when he asked her to prove her chastity by walking through fire (*agnipariksha*), the idea being that, if Sita had been faithful to her husband, she would be unscathed and that would be her proof of purity. Sita's willingness to enter a burning pyre is regarded as the iconic example of devotion to a husband, and many Indian women are encouraged to model such unquestioning dedication in their married lives. However, a careful analysis of Sita's actions shows that there is more to her character than submission to her husband. When her chastity was questioned, she relented, but her disappointment was reflected in her decision to leave her husband after their sons had grown up as strong warriors. As per the epic legend, Sita decided to return to mother earth (i.e., the earth splits open and Sita disappears into the opening, symbolizing the embracing of Sita by mother earth), instead of a life as a queen with Rama. In this final act, Sita denounces the prestige and luxury of a royal life by exercising her willpower to leave her husband (Pattanaik, 2010).

Mahabharata is a very rich epic and comprises 100,000 couplets. It also has a myriad of characters, some being prominent women. Draupadi is the wife of five brothers (Pandavas). When Draupadi was disrespected by the Kauravas (Pandavas' 100 cousins) who disrobed her in public, she vowed to have her vengeance by having all of them killed by the Pandavas, her husbands. There was also enmity among the cousins regarding ownership of the kingdoms of Hastinapur and Indraprastha, which thus ensued the battle of *Mahabharata* in which all of the Kauravas were killed. Draupadi felt peace of mind after washing her hair with the blood of the Kauravas. Kunti was Draupadi's mother-in-law (mother of the Pandavas) who was widowed at a young age. She raised her five sons, and the epic shows her as a very powerful woman who advised her sons and fought for their rights as heirs of Hastinapur. Kunti also had a son before her marriage, whom she had abandoned due to societal pressure, but who later plays a prominent role in the story of *Mahabharata* against the Pandavas.

While the epics are fictitious, they do carry vignettes of the society and represent the status of women and challenges posed to their leadership. The *Mahabharata*, for example, states:

No man, even in anger, should ever do anything that is disagreeable to his wife; for happiness, joy, virtue and everything depend on the wife. Wife is the sacred soil in which the husband is born again, even the Rishis cannot create men without women.— *Adi Parva, Mahabharata Book*, 1.74.50–51

The Anushasana Parva compares the value of a daughter to a son, as follows:

The daughter, O king, has been ordained in the scriptures to be equal to the son.— *Bhishma, Anushasana Parva, Mahabharata*, 13.47.26

While these may be true in theory, in reality, we often see these values being violated in the epics, thereby reflecting reality in Indian society. For instance, Draupadi's eldest husband, Yudhistira (who is also considered the epitome of dharma or virtuousness) pawns her in a game of dice, thus subjecting her to extreme humility at the hands of his cousins, the Kauravas. A courtyard full of learned and valiant men look on, but no one protests when Draupadi is disrobed in public after Yudhistira loses her in gambling.

It is interesting to note a couple of societal norms from these epics that are relevant in the quest for gender equality. First, there is hardly any mention of unmarried women in these epics. Especially, all of the *Panchakanya* (group of five iconic heroines of Hindu epics) were all married. This implies a familial identity, especially an identity as a wife as it was and is still regarded as central to a woman's self-concept in Indian society. If any woman happens to forego close ties with family (especially as unmarried, divorced, widowed women, or single mothers), they are likely to be regarded as outcasts and rebels. This privileging of family can pose many challenges for aspiring women leaders in India as they are less likely to be deemed successful if they do not sustain a family life beside their leadership roles in professional work contexts.

Second, prominent women in the epics exercised their power indirectly through their husbands or their sons (e.g., Draupadi seeking revenge through her husbands' prowess, Sita and Kunti reclaiming respect through rearing strong sons), thus implying the importance of men as the ultimate harbingers of women's respectability in society. Although the shastras (holy books) speak about respect and equality of women, it finally depended on men as to how the women were treated. This diminishing of women's power speaks volumes about the patriarchal control that women leaders still experience in today's India in both their personal and professional lives.

Overview of Chapters

Now we want to explain how in this book provides a comprehensive understanding of the barriers and opportunities prevalent in Indian society for women leaders. This book consists of 15 chapters, presented in four parts: barriers and challenges, signs of hope, sector perspectives, and international perspectives. The first part on barriers and challenges delineates how deep-rooted patriarchy can pose challenges through institution of gender roles and cultural constraints and how those constraints can spill over into professional contexts, thereby making the pursuit of career development extremely difficult for aspiring women leaders in India. The second part on signs of hope sheds light on the policies and legislation, educational opportunities, and cross-sector partnerships and collaborations that are being developed in India for the benefit of women leadership development and success. The third part gives an in-depth overview of the current state of women leaders in different sectors (e.g., corporate, entrepreneurship, government, education, non-government organizations, and agriculture) in India. And, in the fourth part, a comparative presentation is provided to understand how the challenges and opportunities facing women leaders in India compare to those in other Asian countries.

Conclusion

It is said that leaders are born, not made. Many women leaders are born in India and many of them are able to establish themselves; yet, there are many others who are never allowed to spread their wings due to tremendous societal pressures. It should be our endeavor to nurture a society in which women leaders are not only born, but made as well. This book is a step toward fostering a culture that enables women leaders to grow and prosper through challenging the age-old norms of patriarchy. Through building awareness about the scope of challenges and possibilities for today's women leaders in different sectors in India and through comparing the state of women leaders in India with those in other Asian countries, this book provides a unique glimpse of women leadership in diverse Indian contexts in which traditional cultural expectations and modernized values coexist.

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Part I

Barriers and Challenges

This part delineates how deep-rooted patriarchy can pose challenges through institution of gender roles and cultural constraints and how those constraints can spill over into professional contexts making the pursuit of career development extremely difficult for aspiring women leaders in India.



2

Family Roles Posing Challenges for Women Leaders in India

Sanghamitra Chaudhuri, Ashutosh Muduli,
and Ridhi Arora

Since the economic reforms that were introduced in 1990, the leadership landscape of India has undergone some macro-level changes. Of the many changes, the liberalized economy of India resulted in a massive labor shift that successfully created ample job opportunities for educated and urban women (Budhwar, Saini, & Bhatnagar, 2005). As a result, the Indian government and organizations have witnessed an increase in women employees in many spheres of society, painting an optimistic and progressive portrayal of Indian women at local, national, and global levels. Despite the increasing representation of women in the workforce,

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Indian women largely remain underrepresented in senior management and leadership positions. Women's representation in leadership positions in India ranged from 3% to 5.8% (Catalyst, 2011; Singh, 2003) compared to 14% to 15% in the west (Catalyst, 2011).

The inevitable question then becomes, what explains the lack of women's representation at the leadership level despite many progressive policies undertaken by the Indian government and organizations? The answer is not as straightforward as one might think. It is buried in the complex labyrinth of India's social, cultural, and economic systems, in which Indian women still struggle to set themselves free from the gendered quagmire of family roles that relegates them to a caregiver's role, creating a major hindrance for them in the pursuit of leadership.

Over the years, scholars and practitioners around the globe have been debating the relative absence of women in senior management and leadership roles (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003; Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014). Many of them have acknowledged that gender differences intertwined with social and cultural hierarchies artificially promote men over women, resulting in the restrictive movement of women into coveted leadership roles (Lanaj & Hollenbeck, 2015; Weyer, 2007). The situation becomes grimmer in patriarchal societies that further fuel gender discrimination and stereotyping (Singh & Terjesen, 2008). Typically, women are considered to be the primary caretakers and are restricted to domestic roles and childcare activities. On the contrary, men have the privilege, but also the onerous position of being the breadwinners (Heilman, 1997).

India is a heterogeneous country deeply rooted in patriarchy, diverse cultures, multiple religions, traditional caste systems, varied languages, and uneven distribution of economic wealth (Woszczyński, Dembla, & Zafar, 2016) that directly or indirectly hinder women from being leaders in India. This uneven distribution of resources has perpetuated the increasing chasm between rural and urban India. The liberalization of the Indian economy, followed by significant western influences, has impacted the socio-cultural values of urban Indian women. It has led them to question traditional dogmas and challenge existing beliefs based on patriarchy, culture, religion, and gender stereotyping. Increased access to education and women-friendly policies has benefitted mostly urban

women. As a result, urban Indian women are gradually coming out of their cocoons, but the scenario changes dramatically for rural Indian women, where similar changes are far from visible (Haq, 2013). Caste oppression, in which one's lot in life is determined by birth (see the section on castes later in this chapter for a more extensive explanation) is still prevalent in the rural areas of India, but not as much in urban India, though castes have been legally removed from all government documents (Barua & Barua, 2012). For women born in the lower castes, the system still poses a hurdle for women to develop as leaders.

Further adding to this complexity is the notion of gendered family roles and the influence of social norms and societal expectations. Family patterns in India encourage a network of men-centered relationships resulting in a dominating patriarchy system that is a potential threat, hindering Indian women from engaging actively in leadership roles. Additionally, Radhakrishnan (2009) posited that traditional cultural definitions make it difficult for Indian women to break through the shackles of a caregiver's role. Women continue to serve a dual role as an employee in an organization and as a wife, mother, sister, mother-in-law, and daughter for her household. The time taken to meet the needs of everyone in the household is certainly a potential obstacle as women try to break through the glass ceiling.

The foundation for women's development is laid in one's family. Implicit and sometimes explicit gendered discrimination practices at home may influence the self-confidence of many women as they grow up in the secured but structurally oppressed confinements of the home. Providing a gender-neutral environment at home is crucial to the holistic development of women so they can transform into a successful leader in the future. However, the impact of social norms, cultural beliefs, rural versus urban settings, and the caste system serves as potential hindrances in developing a gender-neutral environment at home, fueling gendered family roles. In this chapter, we highlight the multiple factors that have encouraged the notion of family roles in India. India is a breeding ground of an information-driven, rising middle class exposed to a plethora of global prospects (Adhikari, 2013). There is a changing mindset from traditional to egalitarian family roles in which men and women share family chores (Ganesh & Ganesh, 2014). A handful of researchers have concurred that modern

India is undergoing incremental transformation in which traditional roles of men and women have started to blur (Ganesh & Ganesh, 2014; Valk & Srinivasan, 2011). We end this chapter with an optimistic discussion about the impact of globalization and work-life balance policies and how they are helping to moderate gendered family roles.

Gendered Family Roles in India and Influence of Social Norms

Traditionally, in Indian society, there has been a strong presence of patriarchal norms that have shaped gendered family roles. These patriarchal ideologies classify women primarily as caretakers or homemakers, responsible mainly for the family domain, taking care of household tasks, with men being responsible for the work domain and as financial providers of the extended family (Ahmed & Carrim, 2016; Patel, Govender, Paruk, & Ramgoon, 2006). Being in a men-dominated society, women are expected to give priority to their family and household and give secondary importance to the fulfillment of their career aspirations (Ghosh & Haynes, 2008). In addition, Indian women are responsible for taking care of the elderly members in the extended family system (Velgach & Rajadhyaksha, 2009). As India is high on the cultural dimension of masculinity (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), women in India have been largely restricted from performing activities outside of the home (Derne, 1995). Also, the Indian family system emphasizes controlling and dominating functions for men and supporting functions for women. Thus, men perform functions of earning, participating in politics, and performing heavy physical tasks, while women are accountable for supporting functions, such as taking care of their extended family, especially elders and children, and attending to household and domestic tasks (Chowdhury & Patnaik, 2013). Even though men, and not women, are held primarily responsible for providing economic support to the family, money earned by women is still considered to belong to her husband and his family.

Consequently, women have limited access to family finances (Almeida & Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999).

Gender roles have become well differentiated in the Indian family system. The socialization process to accomplish this norm begins from birth. Supporting this notion, Chowdhury and Patnaik (2013) offered that, in Indian families, “both boys and girls grow with special value attached to the male child” (p. 61). A girl’s personality is shaped from childhood with a realization that her stay in her parents’ family is temporary, and marriage and motherhood are the ultimate goals in her life. In order to fulfill her journey toward accomplishing these ultimate goals, she is nurtured in her parents’ house in an affectionate and delicate manner and is strictly scrutinized for her overall conduct and behavior. This results in developing a girl subjected to vulnerability and decreased self-esteem; on the other hand, a boy’s personality is fully developed with a greater focus on self-worth that further strengthens the notion of men’s power and dominance in the Indian family system. Therefore, gender bias is a significant phenomenon within Indian families that influences the upbringing of boys and girls. Girls in Indian families are groomed for marital roles with values emphasizing *sewa* or service, self-adjustment, and a greater tolerance for injustice done to them (Dube, 1988). As a result, often Indian women develop an inferiority complex and feelings of low self-worth and self-esteem (Chowdhury & Patnaik, 2013).

Even today, women are responsible for managing their household, and the family takes equal stature with fulfillment of their career needs and commitment to work (Munn & Chaudhuri, 2016). Commitment of women to their domestic life and homemaker roles continues; additionally, they cannot seek employment or pursue a career post-marriage without spousal and his family’s support (Kalliath, Kalliath, & Singh, 2011). They constantly face challenges juggling work and family, which impacts their well-being negatively and results in increasing conflicts between their home and workplace (Chowdhury & Patnaik, 2013). Moreover, as women spend most of their time engaged in day-to-day activities of managing their work along with their household and children, they often face work-family conflict, especially in regard to parenting duties (Munn & Chaudhuri, 2016).

Cultural Beliefs that Encourage Gendered Family Roles

India has a rich cultural heritage, extending back about 5,000 years. The population of India is multi-racial, multi-religious, and multi-lingual (Kurien, 2001). It is a country of cultural diversities. The culture of north India is different from south India, as with east and west. Further, within the same region, culture varies from province to province, region to region, caste to caste, and so on. For this diverse population, religion provides a common base, and, therefore, any attempt to understand Indian culture and related beliefs is integrally related to religion. In India, more than 80% of the population are Hindus and the rest belong to Islam (12%), Christianity (2.5%), and Jainism (2%) (Census of India, 2011). Hence, most of the cultural beliefs are based in the practices and beliefs of Hinduism.

Hinduism has several traditions and practices that support and also obstruct the pursuit of leadership qualities among Indian women. The supportive practices are that girls are revered as forms of goddess, often called *Maa*, meaning mother, symbolizing the qualities of care, compassion, and love, qualities that serve a nurturing leader well. Women are considered as symbols of the goddess of wealth (*Lakshmi*), of wisdom (*Saraswati*), and of protector (*Durga*). This is evident from ancient Hindu scriptures (e.g., *Vedas* and *Upanishads*) and contemporary Indian communities (e.g., Sindhi and Punjabi). In the Sindhi, Punjabi, Nepali, and other communities, girls are not supposed to touch the feet of their parents; instead, on occasions like Navaratri (a festival for worshipping the goddess, *Durga*), everyone, including parents, touch the feet of the girls, thereby showing respect to them (Dube, 1988).

As for traditional beliefs in Hinduism that obstruct the pursuit of leadership among women, the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, and other scriptures, give numerous examples of women and their submissive role in the family. In the *Mahabharata*, another Hindu religious text, the story of *Draupadi* explains the role of women in a family. *Draupadi* is both beautiful and spirited. She is noted for her dedication and selfless and uncomplaining service to her husbands. She does not see this service as demeaning; it is

instead a source of pride and self-worth. Through her actions and behaviors as a wife, she finds both fulfillment of her *dharma* (duty) and the source of her *shakti* (power) (Pandey, 1997). These characteristics reinforce the caregiving role of Indian women and allude to her role as simply supporting male members of the family.

Further obstructive practices of Hinduism include child marriage, widow burning, and polygamy, all of which have been challenging for Indian women since the later Vedic period (1100–500 BCE). Several other examples include the *devdasi* system (women serving in temples and exploited by priests) during the Gupta dynasty (319–485 CE) as propounded by Kautilya (an Indian philosopher, economist, and royal advisor who authored the ancient Indian political treatise, the *Arthashastra*), considering women as equivalent to property (*Smritis* and *Puranas*), denial of any property rights, and not inviting widowed women to social functions (e.g., marriage and naming of a child), and obstructing the empowerment of Indian women, thus reinforcing the notion of gendered family roles.

Prevalence of Caste System and Its Impact on Family Roles

The Indian caste system is historically one of the main dimensions by which people in India are socially differentiated (Deshpande, 2010). The caste system is a classification of people into four hierarchically ranked castes classified according to occupation that determines access to wealth, power, and privilege. At the top are the *Brahmans*, usually priests and scholars, followed by the *Kshatriyas*, or political rulers and soldiers; the *Vaishyas*, or merchants; and the *Shudras*, who are usually laborers, peasants, artisans, and servants (Deshpande, 2010). The *Shudras* are considered to be untouchables. These individuals perform occupations that are considered unclean and polluting, such as scavenging and skinning dead animals and are considered outcasts in the society (Sharma, 1981).

The effect of caste on Indian women can be explained through a quote from the *Manusmriti*, which says that “A Brahman, Kshatriya, or Vaishya

man can sexually exploit any shudra woman” (*Manusmriti* IX.25). Even the killing of a Shudra or Dalit (Dalits are the lowest caste of Hindu social structures, considered *the untouchables*) woman is explicitly justified as a minor offense for the Brahmins, equal to the killing of an animal (*Manusmriti*). If the killing of an untouchable was justified as a minor offense, one can imagine the treatment they received throughout their lives. The laws in the *Manusmriti* and other Vedic scriptures close all economic, political, social, educational, and personal channels for Dalit women for success. Even today, we see severe oppression and exploitation of Dalit women (Rai, 2016).

A conservative and rigid hierarchical caste system has influenced Indian women’s role in the family. Although women generally have been responsible for all domestic activities, such as raising a family, being sexually faithful to their husbands, and obeying their husbands and mothers-in-law, still their role varies somewhat from caste to caste. The higher caste women (*Brahmin* women) are more dependent on their husband, financially and otherwise, and are not supposed to move out frequently without their husband. *Brahmin* widows are considered to be inauspicious, and the possibility of their re-marriage is bleak. They are supposed to follow all the customs and traditions, such as refraining from re-marriage, shaving their heads, and eating non-spicy and boiled foods. On the other hand, *Dalit* women are allowed to go outside for employment, but their position in the family is that of a subordinate. A *Dalit* woman is under the domination of men in both the family and society and is subjected to unnecessary and illogical customs and traditions, including staying away from cosmetics, wearing dull clothes, and so on. They seldom question the violence done to them by their husbands or other family men (Manorama, 1995). In fact, they think that it is their husbands’ inherent right to torture them. Such gendered oppressive practices, considering women as secondary to men reinforced the notion of gendered roles in ancient India. Some of the customs were so deep-rooted, such as not raising their voice against their husbands and blindly following their orders, that they have continued to impact some aspects of modern Indian society.

Impact of Rural Versus Urban Settings on Gendered Family Roles

India is a rural-dominated country. The census of India in 2011 showed that, of the 1,210 million Indians, 833 million lived in rural areas, while 377 million lived in urban areas. The report also suggested that, while the literacy rates of rural women and men are 57.9% and 77.2%, the urban literacy rates are 79.1% and 88.7%, proving that women in India are less literate than men in both rural and urban areas (Census of India, 2011). There is a negative attitude toward educating girl children for fear that they will be exposed to a broader world view and move away from these traditions. Also, the majority of rural Indian women do not have the right to choose their partner and, hence, do not have a say in challenging traditional family roles thrust on them after marriage. Marriage is arranged by relatives and family members, where caste plays an important role. If a girl wishes to marry someone from another caste or tribe, traditional leaders of the villages will oppose it. There are *Khap panchayats* (a *Khap* is a community organization representing a clan or a group of related clans; *panchayats* are councils) that are found mostly in northern India, particularly among the *Jat* (a traditional agricultural community in northern India) people of western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, where traditional village elders never recognize any love marriage. This is the case even where the bride and bridegroom belong to the same village, even if they are from the same caste and the marriage is legalized through registration in the court (Pandit, 2017). According to *Khap* leaders, marrying someone within the village or caste is equal to marrying a sibling. They act as a village court and pass judgments, at times punishing the couple by death, even if the Indian legal system does not recognize their judgment. In many cases, the brutality of such crimes is not even opposed by the parents. This shows the prevalence of gender inequality in rural India. Therefore, in rural India, women are continuously being subjected to oppression, intimidation, and public shaming, furthering the notion of gender inequality.

Urbanization, industrialization, globalization, better educational opportunities, consequent exposure to Western ideals and norms, and the women's movement for equal rights and status have played a major role in changing the fate of Indian women in urban areas. All these factors have influenced urban women to adopt changes and modifications in terms of family values and roles. Further, the constraints of sharing limited resources and the increasing cost of living have encouraged women to venture out for work and men to be more accepting of working women. Participation of women in the workforce outside the home has created a drastic change in family scenarios. Family invasion by television, internet, mobile phones, video cultures, and growing consumerism has further helped the process of value transformation among urban women (Pandit, 2017).

Urban families wish to live in small, nuclear family units, while continuing to draw strength from the extended family, particularly during times of stress, strain, and crisis (Chadda & Deb, 2013). It is especially evident in the case of dual earner families, where both husband and wife work outside as full-time workers. This has resulted in ambiguity in setting roles, responsibilities, and expectations for children and adolescents. The most affected are the girls and woman of the family who are expected to take care of domestic affairs along with the responsibility of work. Although much has changed with women's employment patterns, there is still a long way to go in how modern families view marriage, work, household activities, and parenthood, in which gender plays a vital role.

The Changing Face of India

In the previous sections, we shared a glimpse of how the notion of gendered roles came into being in India. To a large extent, this is deeply intertwined in culture and religion. Additionally, the practice is further fueled by different social norms and personal stereotyping.

However, in spite of the obstacles that women have experienced, much is changing in modern India with the rising middle class, access to ever-increasing service sector jobs, the changing mindset of men and women

in general, and increased opportunities for education and progressive human resource development (HRD) practices. The following section elaborates on each of these factors and how they are aiding in decreasing gendered roles in Indian society.

Rising Middle Urban Class and Changing Mindsets

Under the leadership of Narendra Modi, the current Prime Minister of India, the country is poised on the edge of a steep growth trajectory as a result of the “pro-growth, pro-trade, and pro-private investment platform” (Hedrick-Wong, 2017, p. 3). Additionally, the rise of digital India has resulted in a resilient and prosperous middle class that is booming. It has changed workforce composition with the entry of more women, especially in organized sectors (Bhalla & Kaur, 2011), including banking, information technology (IT), and business process outsourcing (BPO). As reported by Ernst & Young, India’s middle class, which is at 50 million now, will reach 475 million by 2030, heralding the beginning of shining India, very different from what it is today (Fuller, 2015).

Additionally, with the continuous rise in the urban segment, it is estimated that close to half of the Indian population will reside in urban areas (Singhi & Jain, 2017). With migration to urban areas and affluence, access to education will become easier. Education creates awareness by positively influencing how people may think, believe, and behave. Furthermore, it helps in assuaging gendered roles and gender disparity that are rooted deeply, mostly in rural and less educated Indian mindsets as a result of their cultural and religious orientation.

The current state of the economy, rising commodity prices, and the desire to lead a comfortable life are changing age-old traditions in which women stay at home and men are the sole breadwinners. Present-day requirements have made dual incomes in a family more of a necessity than a want. Coupled with higher paying information technology (IT) and other service-focused jobs for educated women employees, present-day requirements have resulted in men coming forward and being open to the idea of sharing household responsibilities. The role of the extended family is also important here. Urban India is increasingly

witnessing the supportive role extended by parents-in-law, frequently shouldering responsibility at home, thereby reducing the burden of household and childcare activities for Indian women, so that women professionals can succeed at their work.

Impact of Globalization

The role of Indian women is in a state of flux as they gradually emerge from the shackles of traditional roles and social mores that encouraged patriarchy into a new world where freedom and fighting against social prejudices are acceptable and encouraged. The impact of globalization on the movement toward gender equality cannot be understated (Deb & Sen, 2016). Globalization has far-reaching effects, especially in the rural areas of India, where many non-government organizations (NGOs), domestically and internationally, including self-employed women's associations (SEWA), India Corps, and many more, are being instrumental in empowering rural Indian women and providing them with a much stronger voice by making them financially independent (Deb & Sen, 2016).

One of the gifts of globalization for urban Indian women is the increasing information and communications technologies (ICT) jobs. This has resulted in a plethora of service sector jobs flooding the Indian labor market with back office transactions; call center and BPO work; and knowledge work, including software programming, medical transcription, accounting, and legal services (Gereffi & Sturgeon, 2004). Furthermore, the proportion of women employees in IT is considerably higher than in any other employment sector. IT sector organizations and multinational firms usually offer higher pay and better working conditions for Indian women and jobs that provide empowerment, satisfaction, challenges, and learning, even if the women have to juggle multiple responsibilities (Valk & Srinivasan, 2011). The literature also suggests that Indian spouses are providing instrumental support by not only helping women with household chores, but also taking care of their children when their wives reach home late from work (Roy, 2003; Valk & Srinivasan, 2011). In fact, many Indian men are enthusiastic about their wives working and willingly share household responsibilities. This consequently is helping in blurring the gendered roles as men also become nurturers and caregivers.

Progressive HRD Practices

Many Indian organizations, especially those that have a global presence, are beginning to adopt progressive HRD practices as used in the west and bring them to India. A number of multinational organizations are already bringing in progressive policies as they set up their offices in India. This has resulted in increasing women's participation in the workforce as women are often attracted to work for organizations that offer flextime, telecommuting, reduced workweeks, and generous maternity and paternity leave policies.

In fact, breaking the gender stereotypes, Deutsche Bank, across the Asia-Pacific region, including India, has started offering six-month leaves to fathers if they are the primary caregiver (Business Standard, 2016). This new policy is one of the first efforts to break free from the shackles of gendered roles that hold women primarily responsible for all childcare needs. In a recent initiative, the Indian parliament extended maternity leaves from 12 to 26 weeks so that mothers could reduce stress in the most vulnerable phase of their children's lives (Nair, 2016). Increasingly, more Indian organizations, including Godrej, Yes Bank, and Aviva Life Insurance, are realizing the need for their men employees to be equal partners in supporting their spouses before and after the birth of their child and are in the process of revisiting some of their existing policies (Dasgupta & Khosla, 2016).

Conclusion

With the impact of globalization, the rising middle/upper class, changing mindsets, and progressive HRD practices, India is slowly but steadily moving toward a gender-neutral culture. Additionally, Ganesh and Ganesh (2014) concluded that, in modern India, the rigid role definitions for men and women are disappearing. The massive changes that India has witnessed in the past few decades have resulted in the entry of more women into the workforce.

Reflecting on the under-representation of women at the leadership level, Seo, Huang, and Han (2017) noted that it is almost impossible for

organizations to eradicate the notion of gendered roles unless the government and society at large implement initiatives to shift social structures and perceptions of gendered roles. Therefore, it is extremely important for the country to take on more education and literacy drives. This would help empower more rural women with financial independence and continue creating jobs in the service sector. Subsequently, it will encourage women's participation in the labor pool so as to redefine gender roles and not restrict women to the confinement of the four walls of their home.

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3

Indian Women in Leadership: Engaging with the Terrain of Constraints Rooted in Religion and Traditions

Venkatesh Murthy and Sangeeta Roy

In today's India, women represent only one in eight members of parliament, two in ten cabinet ministers, and one in ten heads of state and union territories (Rao, 2016). The scenario of corporate India is equally dismal. Indian women represent only 1 in 14 in corporate governing boards (DNA, 2016). Such skewed representation of women in senior positions is also visible in professions historically dominated by men. Although the ratio of men and women in the population is almost 50:50 (9.4 women for every 10 men) (Census, 2011), women's presence in leadership roles is poor. Why is there such a disparity? Answers to this question are difficult to find in industrial modern societies; instead, plausible explanations lie in the traditional practices emanating from religion, ancient scriptures, beliefs, traditions, and value systems in India.

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Using a variety of electronic databases (Google Scholar, Google Books, EBSCO, ProQuest, Elsevier, JSTOR, Project MUSE, SSRN, and Wiley Interscience), and multiple keywords (leadership, culture, women, traditions, India, caste, and religion), we reviewed articles, reports, and other documents published since 2010, except for a few dated references that were not available in recent readings.

Religion and Women in Leadership

In line with the context that we have described above, the more significant question we probed is, what are the religious and traditional components that come in the way of leadership roles of women? We adopted a definition provided by Flood (2012): “religion[s] are cultural forms within which people live meaningful lives, that religion[s] mediate the human encounter with mystery and fill the world with meaning, and that these cultural forms of meaning-making have political and social ramifications that should be taken seriously” (p. 3). Flood further reiterated that ethical, spiritual, and ritual aspects become integral to religion in its attempt to accomplish the mediating role in societal functions. Over time, these components turn into beliefs, preferences, and constraints that essentially shape social and economic interactions between genders in society (Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2006).

Therefore, in this chapter, we treat religion as fundamental to gender discourse and women’s participation in leadership roles. As India is a diversified culture with many religious practices, analysis of one religion, even the dominant one, is not sufficient. Instead, we focused on some of the dominant religious traditions and their contributions in India to the development of traditional beliefs that contribute to today’s scenario of lower women’s participation in leadership roles. We provide a detailed account of Hinduism and Islam. For other religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism, we present a quick snapshot.

Hinduism

In Hinduism, an ancient polytheistic religion, it is quite difficult to assert which of the gods or goddesses are prominent. Even today, Hinduism is

not seen as a strict religious doctrine. More often, it is perceived as a culture (a way of life) and less of a religion. As there are several hundreds of gods and goddesses, there are as many scripts and proponents of those scripts. Therefore, it is a daunting task for a researcher to assert the view of women within Hindu literature. Nevertheless, there are important scriptures that form the basis of Hindu faith. The most influential has been the *Bhagavad Gita*, arguably one of the most ancient of scriptures. No definitive dates have been asserted to date. However, the oral tradition might be as ancient as 10,000 BCE (Sidharth, 1999), while the written evidence dates back to the second century BCE (Witzel, 2003).

The *Bhagavad Gita* tries to reinstate the place of women and other classes of citizens by telling the world loudly and clearly that, irrespective of one's social status or gender, he/she is close to God. It says, for example, "for whosoever makes Me (God [Krishna]) his haven, base born though he may be; Yes, women too, and even serfs—Theirs it is to tread the highest way" (Jeste & Vahia, 2008, p. 204). In explaining God's magnanimity in forgiving all wrongdoings of human beings, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that "whoever they be ..., who takes refuge in me, even though they be born of sin, women or merchants or serfs, they also go on the highest way" (Johnston, n.d., p. 58). Irrespective of who an individual is and what his or her occupation is, God has a place for everyone in his heart. In spirit, the precondition for attaining closeness to God is to perform good deeds and have good thoughts in heart and mind.

The above verses mention a few social groups (e.g., serfs) who are in a social classification of people based on their occupations. This classification of individuals came to be known as the caste system. Caste can be defined as "a large number of mutually interdependent endogamous groups that are mapped into a status hierarchy organised around criteria of purity but interwoven by reciprocal obligation" (Celarent, 2010, p. 1665). It plays a significant role within traditional boundaries of Indian society. For example, in a multi-caste village (where identity is known to everyone), a Dalit cannot aspire to be the key decision maker in village matters (unless granted through political reservation in a decentralized governing structure, such as the *gram panchayat*) or even a priest of a temple. For Dalit women, this can be even harder as caste and gender factors interact. First, she is a Dalit, and second, she is a woman.

However, defeating these odds, in modern India, women from lower-caste strata have participated in all forms of political and economic spheres. As observed by Ciotti (2012), Dalit women have adopted notions, such as *seva* (service) and social work, in their efforts to form an exclusive political identity for themselves and the community as a whole. These ancient Indian concepts, *seva* and social work, were often used by the higher class and caste groups. These concepts denoted *giving away* and *sacrifice* of one's wealth for the good of others. As Ciotti (2012) observed, of late, women from Dalit communities have adopted these terms in their aspirations to attain political power. One could interpret this process as *Sanskritization* or mimicking of cultural aspects of the upper castes by the lower castes. However, if the change in Dalit women's aspirations is looked at through the prism of empowerment, the adoption of new notions (*seva* and social work) in political struggles is a sign of reversing their status as receivers to givers (India Today, 2017). In the mid-nineteenth century (1848), Savitribai Phule, a Dalit woman from Maharashtra (a state in India), along with her husband, established one of the earliest girls schools in India, against the norms of those days (IndiaToday, 2017). Therefore, there have been instances of Dalit women leaders since the mid-nineteenth century. It suggests that there has been a change in the culture of assertion and empowerment among Dalit women. It becomes clear that a new culture of proclaiming Dalit women's space in the domain of leadership is on the rise, as against traditional and religious suppression (Bhattacharya, 2016). However, there remains a need for special attention to a large portion of rural women, including Dalit segments.

To understand women's poor representation in leadership roles, in general, irrespective of caste, it is useful to look at other old scriptures. One is the *Manusmriti*. There is no agreement about the period during which the *Manusmriti* was written. Some claim the period to be between 400 BCE and 200 BCE (Deshpande, 2002), while others, like Buhler, who translated the *Manusmriti* into English, believe it to be 1500 BCE. Some have argued this to be the Vedic period (Manu, n.d.). Thus, the period of the *Manusmriti* is inconclusive. As women in the Vedic period were regarded with the highest respect, the *Manusmriti* appears to be a non-Vedic phenomenon. Therefore, the timeline, as noted by Deshpande

(2002), seems to be more acceptable. If Buhler's translated version of Manusmriti is to be believed as an authentic version of the old document, several verses in the text suggest that:

Women are seductive in nature (verse 213, section II), women are capable of leading astray the world (verse 214, section II), women should be in custody of her father as a girl, her husband as a wife, and under her son as a widow (verse, 148, section 5), and, most importantly, by a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house (verse, 147, section 5). (p. 33)

As presented in the verses of the Manusmriti, women should be tied to strict observation and protection parameters set forth by men. It is further argued that husbands and other related men should honor women with ornaments, clothes, and food. These elements are expected to please a woman and keep her happy (Goodall, 1996). This, in turn, should be reflected in her conduct of the household chores. She is expected to be skillful in doing her household chores, remain economical in spending, and content with what she has. Most important, a woman is expected to devote herself to her husband (Goodall, 1996). Traditionally, the life of Hindu women revolves around their roles as brides, wives, and mothers (Flood, 2008).

As it appears, before the Manusmriti, in the Vedic period India, roughly 2500–800 BCE (Prasad & Mallik, 2007; Tipton, 2008), women enjoyed the same status as men. This is reflected in the worship patterns of female goddesses alongside male deities. Supreme power was attributed to women in the form of their descriptions, such as *Durga* (power [*Shakti*]), *Lakshmi* (prosperity), and *Saraswati* (knowledge); power, prosperity, and knowledge being the three most significant factors dictating terms for society's economy. Interestingly, three women deities held all the three-power factors. At the same time, critics might argue that these three goddesses were wives of three other centers of authority, that is, *Shiva*, *Vishnu*, and *Brahma*, respectively, suggesting that there is a precursor to attaining powerful leadership roles. For example, the power of the goddess, *Durga*, is not independent of male deities. Indeed, it is a power contributed by

all three supreme male gods (*Shiv*, *Vishnu*, and *Brahma*) to form one powerful goddess called *Durga*.

Apart from the goddesses, a few common women from the Vedic period have made it into the ancient history of India: *Ghosha*, *Lopamudra*, *Maitreyi*, and *Gargi*. Ghosha was a granddaughter of Dirghatamas, and daughter of Kakshivat, both composers of hymns in praise of *Ashwini* gods (Das, 2017). Lopamudra was the wife of Agasthya, a Vedic saint (Das, 2017). Though it is not clear, some claim that Maitreyi was one of the wives of Yajnavalkya, a Vedic saint and scholar (Shukla-Yajur-Veda, n.d.). Gargi was a daughter of a sage, Vachaknu, who composed several hymns that questioned the origin of all existence (Das, 2017).

All four women were identified as contributors to what was then known as the most intellectual pursuit, Vedas (Prasad & Mallik, 2007). Several verses of Vedas have been designated as those contributed by these four women. The most impressive was *Gargi* who challenged the established saints, including *Yajnavalkya* (Das, 2017). Critics might argue that all four women scholars of the Vedic period had proximity to powerful men who were considered to be saints and scholars of that time. Therefore, it can be argued that women with some degree of proximity to powerful men held leadership roles in Vedic history. Apparently, in the post-Vedic period (after the fifth century BCE), the status of women deteriorated as seen in such elements being codified in the form of documents such as the Manusmriti.

Despite this deterioration, India saw some of its most prominent women leaders in the medieval period in the realms of literature and activism. One of these prominent women was *Akka Mahadevi*, a twelfth century rebellious woman who denounced her worldly marriage and chose to wed Lord Shiv spiritually. “Throwing away her clothing, she braved unwanted male attention as she began her religious wanderings, until she finally found kindred spirits amongst a company of saints” (Chakravarthy, 1989, p. 23). She contributed to *Veera Saiva* (a *Shivite* [followers of Lord Shiv] cult within Hinduism) and joined *Anubhava Mantapa*, a platform for open debate on various issues, including philosophy and social reform (Chakravarthy, 1989). She spoke fearlessly in public discussion and expressed herself in the form of poems known in the Kannada language as *Vachana*. Her contribution to early thinking on women’s rights to protest against the objectification of women’s bodies

and condemnation of male-centricity in society earned her the title, Akka (elder sister) (Dabbe & Zydenbos, 1989).

Thus, while considerable suppression was induced by some of the writings and thinkers in the post-Vedic period (after 500 BCE), there are also glimpses of rebellion by women. Though traditional religious writings, such as the Manusmriti or Vedas, are less likely to be read by men and women in today's India, word of mouth exchanges from generation to generation and their misinterpretation continue to dictate cultural terms in the lives of women traditionally.

Islam

Does Islam provide space for women to aspire to leadership and become leaders? There was a Supreme Court order on October 7, 2016, requiring the *Haji Ali Dargah* (a mosque and tomb located in Mumbai) Trust to open the doors of the saint's tomb of the *Durgah* to women. As the verdict was given by the last resort of justice (Supreme Court), the Trust had to agree to do so (Bagriya, 2016). However, the Trust has found a way to bypass the order and maintain their stand by erecting a fence a couple of meters away where both men and women would be allowed to come and look at the saint's tomb. This example demonstrates that some *Dargahs* continue to demonstrate hesitation in allowing women to touch the *sacred* elements in the *Dargah*. Perhaps owing to the independent governance of each *Dargah*, decisions on allowing women into sacred areas may differ from one *Dargah* to another. The instance of *Haji Ali Dargah* does not represent all *Dargahs*.

This practice is comparable to cultural traditions emanating from Hinduism. Though there are a few exceptions in Hinduism where women have occupied positions as priests and chief saints, some Hindu groups continue to resist the entry of women into the sanctum sanctorum in some Hindu temples owing to the notions of purity (during menstruation) (Prasanna, 2016).

Although Islam's religious text regards genders as equals in the sight of God, women had very little access to Islamic life (OISO, n.d.). It has been argued that the rise of Islam in the form of religious doctrines coming from

the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* helped to improve the status of women compared with the pre-Islamic era in the following aspects: (a) Islam recognized women's right to choose their partners, (b) Islam set the limits on the practice of polygyny (a Muslim man can have a maximum of four wives, if and only if he can afford to provide for and treat them equally), (c) treating men as a legal guardian of women, (d) grooms had to pay a dowry to the bride directly, (e) women could inherit wealth and manage finances, and (f) Islam commanded men to support their divorced wives financially (OISO, n.d.). It is even argued that the practice of veiling women's faces was culturally adopted, as a method to protect women from strange men (OISO, n.d.). In fact, the religious sources state that women should dress modestly, but they do not specifically require that she wear a veil (PRC, 2013). However, most Islamic thinkers mandate that women wear a veil (PRC, 2013). In opposition to such an imposition, women, in a global survey, clearly called for the right to decide whether to wear a veil (PRC, 2013).

Although Islamic law extended some rights to women and limited the privileges of men, it did not change the dominant position of men in Muslim society. For example, the *Qur'an* requires women to be obedient to their husbands, and it describes men as a degree higher than women in regards to rights and responsibilities. The scriptures also permit men to divorce their wives without cause and deny women custody rights over children who have reached a certain age (OISO, n.d.). Contrary to the original doctrine of equality between the genders, as found in some recent surveys, "a majority of Muslims say that a wife should always obey her husband" (PRC, 2013, para. 1).

In this context, particularly in India, there are several common grounds for women of both Hinduism and Islam to resist traditional systems related to women. However, there can be differences in their approach to seeking rights. While some Muslim women tend to follow the constitutionally available methods, such as seeking justice through the courts in matters of divorce and family inheritance, other Indian feminist leaders of Islam are of the belief that the *Quran* grants them several rights that the Islamic patriarchal society has been denying for centuries. Hence, some women of Islam take on the social equality battle differently by reinterpreting the *Quran* from a woman's point of view (Rasheed & Sharma, 2015; Vatuk, 2008).

It has been evident in recent revelations by some women members of the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) that some Muslim women still believe in *Sharia* law (PTI, 2016). Among Muslims, *Sharia* law is considered to be a set of religious principles (Ahmed, 2017). It consists of a Sharia Council, which makes decisions on matters concerning personal issues including divorce (Ahmed, 2017). As per *Sharia*, a man can divorce his wife by pronouncing divorce (*talaq*) thrice. However, the same is not applicable to women. If a woman wants to divorce her husband, she has to appeal to the Sharia Council and establish the grounds for her decision to divorce (Ahmed, 2017). In this context, one of the key discussion points in India during 2016–2017 has been about abolishing the triple *talaq* system and using the rules of the civil court to govern the personal life disputes of the Islamic population.

Interestingly, the Supreme Court of India gave its verdict (August 22, 2017) by declaring *triple talaq* unconstitutional (Mahapatra, 2017). Progressive people, irrespective of their religious faith, have been expecting the women's wing of the AIMPLB to lead a progressive movement to make the constitutional rights of the land available to everyone in equal measure. However, AIMPLB seems to have very little interest in constitutional rights. Instead, it is searching for space for women within the existing religious framework (Engineer, 2016) by reinterpreting the religious verses and traditional practices. As a result, many Islamic women are caught between traditionally rooted social space and constitutionally granted social space.

Muslim women, at the global level, have been ahead of other women when it comes to leading countries in political leadership roles (Adamczyk, 2016). Some countries with high Muslim populations have had women Prime Ministers and Presidents: Pakistan, Bangladesh (both of these countries were part of India before partition in 1947), and Indonesia. In the history of India, Razia Sultan (1210–1236 CE) ruled Delhi between 1236 and 1240. Probably, she was the first woman Muslim emperor of India. In 2016–2017, the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir was a Muslim woman. One of the central government ministers in 2016–2017 was also a Muslim woman. However, this is not enough to claim that they have arrived in leadership roles. A few privileged women can usually find a way through. However, the millions at the bottom continue to be

victims of their culture. The woman leaders of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia reveal interesting insights into the political legacy these women inherited as daughters or wives of assassinated men leaders. Even the case of the present chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir has a legacy of an inherited and nurtured politician. The point here, as with some Hindu women leaders, is that these Muslim women did not come into power on their own but rode on the coattails of their father or husband.

Buddhism

In India, eight million (0.80%) are Buddhists (Census, 2011). Buddhist teachings call for equal participation of all classes and creeds, for both men and women (Duwadi, 2013). Hence, at the outset, it appears that women and men both have equal rights to attain salvation. Drawing from one of the earliest Buddhist documents, Powers (2009) argued that Buddha viewed women as seductive and a distraction to *Bhikkhus* (a man monk). Women may derail the process of attaining *dharmā* (ultimate truth). Perhaps this is the reason why Buddha delayed women's entry into *sangha* (Buddhist monastic community). Later, upon request from Goutami (a woman who became his disciple), he reluctantly allowed women to enter *sangha* (Barnes, 1996; Wilson, 2012). However, their joining was contingent on following eight special rules (Wilson, 2012). "Those rules involve a subordination of *Bhikkhunis* (female priest) to *Bhikkhus* (male priest)" (Duwadi, 2013, p. 54). In this context, a feminist writer made an interesting observation:

As a practising Buddhist, and practising feminist, I have always had a hard time reconciling my love of the Buddha's teachings with what I saw as historically Buddhism's dismissive attitude toward women. First, I had to contend with the Buddha abandoning his wife and son Rahula ... (to) reach enlightenment. Then, I was uncomfortable with nearly one-third more rules for ordained women than men and the stipulation that even the most vulnerable nuns had to bow to a ten-year-old male novice. (Diana, 2002, p. 11)

In the modern world, *Bhikkhunis* have demonstrated a greater form of renunciation by taking precepts beyond five (Wilson, 2012). Buddhists in general are expected to follow the five moral precepts, which are

refraining from “(a) harming living things, (b) taking what is not given, (c) sexual misconduct, (d) lying or gossip, and (e) taking intoxicating substances, e.g., drugs or drink” (BBC, 2014, para. 7). In addition to these five, Buddhist monks adhere to another five precepts, which are refraining from “(a) taking substantial food after midday (from noon to dawn), (b) dancing, singing and music, (c) use of garlands, perfumes and personal adornment like jewellery, (d) use of luxurious beds and seats, and (e) accepting and holding money, gold or silver” (BBC, 2014, para. 9). It is argued that women have been capable of adapting to the higher order precepts and thereby competing to be as good as men counterparts in the monk hierarchy (Wilson, 2012).

While ordination of women continues to be a controversy within Buddhism, in most Asian contexts, as opposed to conventional Buddhist practice (as often noticed in Korea), women have started to practice meditation-based techniques to attain Dhamma (Theravada Buddhists use this term to represent *Dharma*). Whatever may be the old order of Buddhism, in the new order, the practice of meditation is performed by women and men equally. The technique today is known as Vipassana meditation, popular across India and the world (Hart, 2011).

Importantly, Buddhism was accepted by a large chunk of Dalits in the state of Maharashtra in the early 1950s under the leadership of Ambedkar, father of India’s constitution and the most prominent Dalit leader in India. They call their religion neo-Buddhism (Gawas, 2015). They believe that it teaches equality and equal existence for all, irrespective of gender and caste origin (Gawas, 2015). Some socio-demographers appear to favor the practice of Buddhism as it leads to greater gender equality (Klingorová & Havlíček, 2015). Buddhist-dominated states in the world have the most favorable means concerning equality between the sexes (Klingorová & Havlíček, 2015). States with many Buddhists have demonstrated higher labor market participation and the top literacy rate for women, which is similar to Scandinavian countries (Klingorová & Havlíček, 2015).

Christianity

The other significant minor religion practiced in India is Christianity. On the surface, it appears to regard women as equals to men as its scriptures

subject both men and women to the same standards (Duwadi, 2013). However, there are major differences among the many forms of Christianity practiced. There are inherent gender problems within the conservative or evangelical wing of Christianity (Duwadi, 2013) that relies on the literal interpretation of the Bible. Under this tradition, the husband has the upper hand in controlling the family and the earnings of his wife (Shodhganga, n.d.). In India, at present, Christianity constitutes 19 million (1.9% of the total population) (Census, 2011). Christianity has a long history in India. According to tradition, St. Thomas, one of the original 12 apostles, preached to the people on the coast of Kerala about 2000 years ago (Thekaekara, 2015). By and large, the Christian community in India was converted to it at some point from the Hindu way of life (Shodhganga, n.d.). Most converted Christians continued to follow certain Hindu rituals (Shodhganga, n.d.), and some apparently practice them even today. Their westernization began after the arrival of Portuguese missionaries in the later fifteenth century (Shodhganga, n.d.). Women Christian missionaries who entered India from the UK and the USA enjoyed cooperation from the women in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Kent, 2004). As viewed by some authors, Christian women missionaries preached and practiced a westernized life style and imparted the same way of life to Indian Christian women, which, in turn, apparently helped women to shed their traditions (Kent, 2004). These more liberal teachings draw heavily on the writings of St. Paul who wrote, among other comparisons, “there is neither male nor female” (Galatians 3:28), though conservative Christian groups draw heavily on other writings of Paul.

Conclusion

In spite of India’s diverse religious beliefs and practices, the culture of India has been, and continues to be, heavily influenced by its religious history and traditions. However, today’s changing urbanization, industrial development, and liberalization toward westernization have had mixed impact on different groups of women of India. Women in the urban middle and upper-middle classes have gained better status in

society (Ghosh & Roy, 1997). However, it is possible that they live double lives between traditions and modernity. On the contrary, the lives of women from other groups in India, mostly rural and semi-urban, are enmeshed in the world of traditions and religious constraints. For the majority of women, the same old traditional chores and boundaries are prescribed based on religious values and principles as reviewed in this chapter. In sum, India's culture emanates from religion, ancient scriptures, beliefs, traditions, and value systems and poses difficulties for women in their way to pursuing leadership roles.

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4

Career Development Challenges for Women Pursuing Leadership in India

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This chapter focuses on the career development of women in India and includes three parts. Part I discusses organizational and cultural barriers that hinder Indian women's career development. Part II focuses on the resources available for Indian women leaders' career development with a focus on mentoring. Part III proposes recommendations for improving women leaders' career development in India. For the purpose of this chapter, we searched the following databases to conduct a literature review: Academic OneFile, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest, PsychInfo, and Social Sciences

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Citation Index. Thirty-four articles spanning 2008–2016 were retrieved using the search term career development combined with women, India, human resources, workplace, employee, and job. In addition, two women leaders in Indian organizations were interviewed as additional sources to inform our review. One is a senior manager in a large multinational corporation, and the other is a director of a research institute affiliated with a reputed university.

Cultural and Organizational Barriers

Cultural dimensions, altering demographics, and economic and global changes have all contributed to the changing workforce that is embracing women. Yet, much of the engrained culture still hinders Indian women in many ways. On one hand, there is India, Inc., that represents the new and upcoming India, experiencing tremendous growth with its expanding economy and endless career possibilities. On the other hand, there is old India that represents the traditional values of an India at odds with economic progress and at times limiting women's career development. India has the world's largest workforce, yet it has one of the lowest women's labor participation rates at 35%, and only 30% of the junior-level workforce is women compared with China's 55% (Suessmuth-Dyckerhoff, Wang, & Chen, 2012).

Indian tradition worships and celebrates women's power and strength. Women are honored and respected as benevolent, compassionate, and, in some cases, aggressive deities. However, in the workplace and socially, women are constantly reminded of their fragile nature and, at times, are considered a burden to the family (Nath, 2000). This dichotomous belief is deep rooted in Indian culture and forces Indian women to feel weak and lacking in confidence. This evident duality in roles of Indian women, as perceived in society, is painful and disrespectful.

Lack of family support can lead to stress and lack of confidence. Women are often subjugated and dominated in patriarchal Indian society. Research suggests that financial independence of Indian women's decision-making in the household decreases domestic violence

and increases respect in society (Pande & Moore, 2015). The majority of Indian women are willing to step into the work environment and are capable of taking leadership roles. Nevertheless, due to a lack of family support, they end up staying at home (Pande & Moore, 2015).

Cultural and organizational issues overlap when it comes to women's career development in India. "Indians have various cultural yardsticks, which extend to their business culture" (Jhunjhunwala, 2012, p. 67). Culturally, Indian women are pressured into marriage and dismiss their ambitions of pursuing career opportunities (Tiwari, 2014). India has the worst leaking pipeline for women's career advancement, with 28.7% of leaders at the junior level being women, 14.9% at the middle level, and 3.2% at the senior level (Chawla & Sharma, 2016). This steep drop or leak has been attributed largely to the tradeoffs that women have to make with marriage and motherhood (Srinivasan, Murty, & Nakra, 2013).

The organizational issues that stand in the way of career development vary as well. One perception is the idea that women are better suited for particular positions, such as human resources or public relations (Meena, 2015). This type of prejudice keeps women boxed into perceived roles. Although Indian women are graduating with honors from engineering and business schools, most top corporate positions are held by men (Lockwood, Sharma, Kamath, & Williams, 2009). Men continue to be uneasy about women supervisors, thus hindering their promotions and "assigning them secondary and routine jobs" (Meena, 2015, p. 7). Women who return to the workforce after having children often want to on-board with new employers rather than former ones because of career advancement dissatisfaction (Hewlett, 2013).

As women are becoming an integral part of the workforce in India, it is important for stakeholders to understand and consider the factors stopping Indian women from breaking the glass ceiling to reach and sustain top positions. Stereotypical gender mindsets promote the belief that women are suitable to be followers and men are suitable to lead. Common beliefs attributed to men are strong, confident, and aggressive, while women are perceived as passive, frail, and weak (Pande & Moore, 2015). Along with stereotypical beliefs that hold women back from advancement in their careers, the literature identified factors that act as barriers

or challenges hindering women's growth as leaders. Five identified barriers standing in the way of women's career advancement include:

1. the double-burden (balancing work and home life)
2. the anytime, anywhere performance model (this assumes that, as a leader, one is available anytime to go anywhere in conjunction with corporate advancement)
3. lack of pro-family public policies
4. absence of female role models
5. women's reluctance to promote themselves (Suessmuth-Dyckerhoff et al., 2012, p. 9)

The first factor, work-life balance, is a problem for Indian women because the balance of work life alongside home life is difficult. This is due to many being first generation career women who have very little support or understanding from their families (Meena, 2015). Even aspiring to leadership or executive positions conflicts with Indian women's lifelong socialization and is a significant barrier to women's career advancement, thus inhibiting their professional dreams (Haq, 2013). Many women get married at a very young age and are soon overwhelmed with responsibilities to their husband, in-laws, kids, and household chores. Many women leave the workplace and stay at home to take care of children and elderly family members (Deota, 2014). Fifty-three percent of women in India are struggling to manage personal and work responsibilities with equal efficiency (Deota, 2014; Rao & Indla, 2010). Deota (2014) shared how the managing director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a private sector bank managed both work and family life balance by sacrificing her sleep.

The second factor, the anytime, anywhere performance model could be viewed from the perspective of gender. Women are always expected to take care of household chores, even if they share bread earning responsibilities. Nevertheless, most families still do not allow women to work extra hours and, yet, working late is often mandatory to be successful in leadership positions (Vanderkam, 2015). Because of their inability to be flexible and

work anywhere whenever needed, they inhibit their ability to move into a leadership role.

Concerning the third factor, lack of pro-family public policy, usually, women find it difficult to gain support from family members to take on responsibilities in the workplace, let alone are there policies to support them. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2015 Independence Day speech emphasized gender equality. Yet, the situation has not changed (Pande & Moore, 2015). Rural Indian women are still not allowed to leave their village for training or further education (Pande & Moore, 2015). Ensuring that women have attractive careers in a safe work environment is still a far-fetched goal. Surie stated that "greater policy focus" is required "to ensure women are able to benefit from the remarkable growth that has occurred over the last decade in India" (2016, p. 3). Her belief is that responsible policymakers need to invest in "secondary and tertiary education including vocational and skills training, and developing and strengthening laws and policies to support working women" (p. 3).

With the fourth factor, absence of women role models, Goyal and Parkash (2011) pointed out that the cultural root of gender inequality is strong in Indian society and is reflected in the workplace through a lack of role models who can inspire women to achieve leadership positions. Although the younger generation is attempting to change traditional norms, the common notion that a women's place is at home is still believed by several sections of the community, including, in some cases, women themselves, thus not setting good examples for the younger generation to follow. Even at home, the decision-making role is vested in men. Women in the workplace are not taken seriously. As a result, women hold only 350 boardroom positions, while men possess 8,640 such positions in India's 1,470 listed firms. Very little has changed, even though the Companies Act 2013 mandates that large Indian companies appoint at least one woman director on a company's board (Meena, 2015). This mandate has focused attention on the struggle to find Indian women directors to serve on boards. Despite all efforts of creating gender equality in the workplace, only 4% of Indian women are in top management positions, showing a stark lack of women

leader role models. In many cases, women hesitate to question men's decisions as they are largely not aware of their own rights and capabilities. In many organizations, men are not comfortable being under the leadership of women (Jain, 2016). Tandon, Kohli, and Valla (2007) found that 63.5% of women think that family is a barrier in their career development path in the dental industry; 64.7% of women think that marriage is happier if the husband's career is better than his wife's. The attitude of society toward woman's empowerment is yet to change.

The fifth factor, women's reluctance to promote themselves, can be seen in the lack of information, ability to understand rights, and fears of career setbacks that are common issues in organizations (Goyal & Parkash, 2011). The response to career development aspiration is different for women compared with men. Haq (2013) identified that, when women ask their supervisors or managers about their career advancement, commonly the women are asked whether they are serious about their inquiry. Uppaluri (2014) advocated that modern companies be cognizant of the issues Indian women face in the workplace. The author also observed that, in the beginning, men and women usually start with the same pay package. Nevertheless, as careers progress, women face the glass ceiling. Research has shown that, although the number of women graduates is increasing, the likelihood of their climbing up the corporate ladder is questionable. In order for this to occur, companies would have to address organizational and cultural issues that stand in the way of women's career development and success (Suessmuth-Dyckerhoff et al., 2012).

Available Career Development Resources

Successful Indian organizations, such as Pepsi, ICICI (Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India), McKinsey India, and Infosys, have adopted the "celebration approach" (Vijaylakshmi & Ansari, 2012, p. 174) to facilitate career development for women. "Celebration approach" is one of three approaches Indian organizations have used to beat gender discrimination, the other two being "assimilation approach" and the "accommodation approach." (Vijaylakshmi & Ansari, 2012, p. 174) The assimilation approach considers women employees to be part

of the *boys' club*, adopting a masculine style of functioning, providing tough assignments, and wanting their women employees to be assertive leaders just like men. The accommodation approach recognizes that women should do the same work as men but acknowledges that they have different needs that should be addressed and accommodated at the workplace. This, for example, includes arrangements such as maternity leave and conveniences such as flexible work and working near their partner's workplace. The celebration approach presupposes that women bring with them a unique style and attitude to the workplace, and adoption of this approach means that organizations have made conscious efforts to involve women, grow their talent, and create career development opportunities for them (Budhwar, Saini, & Bhatnagar, 2005; Khosla, 2014). Organizations adopting the celebration approach have pioneered in providing women with inclusive work environments in which women can have ample networking opportunities, can utilize their talents to the fullest, and ultimately remain with the organization. They have also focused on training and skill development for women. In a collectivist culture such as India's (Hofstede, 2011), training is reported to create loyalty to the company and promote retention due to the extended time spent together in training (Batra & Reio, 2016). Apart from the independent efforts of organizations, women's branches of professional organizations, such as the FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), ASSOCHAM (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India), and IMC (Indian Merchants' Chamber), have promoted the career development of women by providing and sponsoring training and development, counseling services, and development of networks. There are other bodies in the public sector, such as Women in the Public Sector (WIPS) and SCOPE (Standing Conference on Public Enterprises), and in the non-government sector, such as SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) (Budhwar et al., 2005).

Despite the availability of several bodies, such as those stated above providing career development resources, lack of support systems and access to professional networks remain major barriers to women's advancement to leadership (Chawla & Sharma, 2016). With the later entry of Indian women into the workforce, work-related developmental needs and organizational navigation needs are felt by them at a higher level

compared with men who have already acculturated themselves to the organization (Haynes & Ghosh, 2012; Vijaylakshmi & Ansari, 2012). To alleviate these issues, a holistic approach to career development needs to be considered by looking at individuals, their individual interactions, and their social contexts. And so, interdependent relationships, both work and non-work-related that contribute to one's growth and development, would be valuable. Mentoring is one such relational developmental tool that is characterized by an interpersonal exchange between a more experienced individual (mentor) and the less experienced individual (protégé). Mentoring helps in socialization to new work settings and improves career outcomes through visibility, exposure, networking, and navigation in the workplace (Kram, 1986; Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010). Of the 34 articles reviewed for this chapter, 24 strongly recommended mentorship as an important organizational facilitator to overcome career development barriers of women.

A primary reason why mentoring would be important as a career development resource in the Indian organizational context is the Indian culture itself. As the culture ranks high in the dimensions of power distance and collectivism (Hofstede, 2011), parental authority patterns, and paternalistic management styles dominate Indian organizations, accounting for the cultural values and needs of Indian employees. Additionally, with India ranking moderately high on performance orientation, employees tend to respect and depend heavily on a nurturing supervisor for enhancing work performance and satisfaction (George, 2011). A combination of high power distance and moderately high performance orientation is evident in mindsets associated with Indians' submissiveness and emotional and personal dependence. Such mindsets pave the way for dependence on a nurturing-task leader who not only focuses on performance and productivity by getting tasks and goals accomplished, but also is genuinely interested in their well-being and provide developmental and emotional support (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010). These mindsets also have an influence on organizational relationships, such as mentoring relationships (Clutterbuck, 2007).

The high power distance orientation might influence perceptions of mentors and protégés about each other's roles, behaviors, and social exchange processes by lending itself to the traditional mentoring form

that is hierarchical. The collectivist orientation and paternalism mindset might lend itself to a personalized relationship with one's mentor being like a senior family member (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010). These findings were corroborated by both of the women leaders interviewed for this chapter. Both had mentors in their careers who were like a father figure to them. Interestingly, both served as mentors and saw themselves as mother figures to their protégés.

While the national culture of India is distinct from western cultures, India is also widely diverse socio-culturally and regionally in terms of languages, castes, and religions, which challenges the idea of a single specific Indian management style (Varma, Srinivas, & Stroh, 2005). Diversity in India may influence the extent to which power distance, dependence proneness, and submissiveness are manifested, and those variances may have implications for organizational relationships (Pio, 2007; Varma et al., 2005). The role of regional culture in mentoring relationships was pointed out by the senior manager we interviewed. She indicated that culture from home is brought into the workplace because she noticed distinct differences between her women protégés based on the region of India from where they come. Women from north India are bound by more conservative family obligations, with pressures from family often leading them to take career breaks. The breaks result in derailment in their paths to leadership or end of their careers altogether. At home, her women protégés from north India often waited on men and were submissive, and this domestic culture affected their mindsets when it came to being mentored at work. For example, household rules forced them to return home within a specific timeframe each evening after the workday, thereby limiting off-hour interactions with their mentor. As the senior manager observed, the submissive mindset also played a role when they were mentored by men in the organization. The senior manager described the mindsets of her women protégés from eastern India as being less-submissive and less-dependence prone. Power distance orientation was lower for these women as their family values were more egalitarian. They had their way around their families and so had more freedom to spend time, for example, interacting with their mentor or traveling out of town with a mentor for work-related purposes. Therefore, as a mentor, she had to keep that in mind while providing psychosocial support (i.e., role modeling,

acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship) (Kram & Hall, 1996) to her protégés to help them establish work-life balance. While she did her part to empower her protégés from north India, she had to work subtly within their boundaries.

Career commitment of Indian professional women is also influenced by national culture, and development programs, such as mentoring, career guidance initiatives, and leadership development programs, can enhance women's commitment to their careers (Arora & Rangnekar, 2014; Ravindran & Baral, 2013; Vijaylakshmi & Ansari, 2012). Indian society is tradition-bound and is low on gender egalitarianism. Career women in India report that work and family conflicts put enormous pressure on them to detract them from their careers. For women's work identities, career commitment is critical. Career commitment is characterized by the development of career goals, followed by attachment and involvement with those goals (Ravindran & Baral, 2013). However, women are often perceived to have less career commitment than men because of fundamental differences in career patterns (Hewlett, 2007). Women's career patterns are mostly characterized by non-linear interruptions because they temporarily take breaks from the workforce and pursue part-time careers (Hewlett, 2007). Having a hard time maintaining a continuous full-time career is not conducive to gaining recognition and climbing up the corporate ladder. For those who opt out of the workforce due to family obligations, except in a few large IT companies, there is no supportive strategy in most Indian companies to allow smooth re-entry. This is because IT is a more recent career field, quite different from the traditional career fields of engineering and finance and has a large number of women employees (Vijaylakshmi & Ansari, 2012). So, women essentially need to establish their career goals and acquire confidence, determination, appropriate skills, and attitudes to overcome the obstacles that hinder them from accomplishing their goals. Perceived psychosocial support from mentors has been reported to have a greater significant impact on career commitment in the Indian context, reflecting preference for an interpersonal relationship based on trust and mutual cooperation (Arora & Rangnekar, 2016).

Career resilience, which is an ability to adapt to changes even when situations are disruptive, comes into play. For many women starting out

in their career or already working their way up the ladder, the real problem does not lie in career commitment but in the individual challenge of finding sufficient drive to reach upper management levels (Arora & Rangnekar, 2014). It appears that gender disadvantage perceptions among women increase as they advance in their careers and simultaneously experience extended family roles as wives and mothers (Srinivasan et al., 2013). So, women employees often find it difficult to persevere in their chosen career line. Our review found that mentors provide protégés with valuable advice to identify a long-term range of opportunities and possibilities for career advancement and thus encourage perseverance (Arora & Rangnekar, 2014).

This finding was supported by both women leaders interviewed for this chapter. The senior manager in the corporate sector indicated that women in her organization used to remain limited in their development by forming and managing small women-only teams. With formal mentoring, they grew to be strong leaders. The leader in academia indicated that her mentor promoted her progression in a new area of research and thus paved the way for her career advancement.

The literature also reported that a strong need for achievement was found to predict career development of successful women in India (Kundu & Rani, 2016) and was related to protégés' initiation of mentoring relationships (Banerjee, 2012). So, Indian women with a strong need for achievement in developing their career and moving up to higher ranks are likely to seek out mentoring relationships. In this way, mentoring plays an important role in enhancing career resilience and career commitment of women employees, especially those returning to work after childbirth.

Indian women often perceive an ambiguous future for themselves with the possibility of exit from the workplace due to family demands and pressures. Some studies report that supportive family members may help women overcome uncertainty and balance their work lives. Family members, such as in-laws, can play a significant role in supporting women executives' efforts to climb the corporate ladder (George, 2011), serving as role models (Chawla & Sharma, 2016). Mentoring has been a critical support widely experienced and appreciated by women professionals (Blake-Beard, 2015). This may be because Indian women's career and

personal lives remain entwined. So, when they are faced with an option to relocate for career advancement, as an example, many hesitate to travel, and those who do must first obtain familial support. Similar thoughts were reported by the leader in academia during her interview when she indicated that her mother was one of her primary mentors during her early career when she was a young mother.

Our review found that psychosocial mentoring support (e.g., role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, counseling, and friendship) is important for enhancing the career resilience of Indian women managers and can act as a significant predictor of career satisfaction and career commitment (Arora & Rangnekar, 2016). This finding was supported by the leader in academia who indicated in her interview that her mentor was extremely understanding and trusting and encouraged her to take a break from her research when she had her first child. Though maternity leave was unheard of at that time in India, she did not have to pay a price as her mentor worked with her in completing her research after she returned from an 18-month maternity break. Therefore, organizations should focus on providing psychosocial mentoring to women employees. This also implies that organizational policies should focus on developing the skills required for providing psychosocial mentoring, such as being an empathetic listener, delivering constructive and encouraging feedback, and being a role model. Preparing organizational members to engage in mentoring relationships would be a way to help them understand the benefits of mentoring as a learning and development tool. Also, because psychosocial mentoring necessitates a trusting relationship, organizations should train potential mentors to develop non-judgmental, trusting, friendly, respectful, and patient characteristics that befit an ideal mentor (Bramley, Burke, Lau, Marentette, & Tallman, 2012).

A component of psychosocial mentoring support is role modeling. For aspiring women leaders and managers struggling with their work-life balance, guidance and support of an experienced senior person who can function as a protector and a role model would instill a sense of confidence and help them effectively deal with obstacles (Arora & Rangnekar, 2014; Beaman, Dufflo, Pande, & Topalova, 2012). The literature often uses social cognitive theory to explain how people learn by observing others, and, thus, manager mentors can serve as role models in developing

protégés for leadership positions by demonstrating work-related interpersonal skills and desired behaviors (Ghosh & Haynes, 2008).

In the context of the Indian culture, which still operates largely with distinction between the genders in social spheres and in schools and colleges, natural association between men and women is looked at with considerable scrutiny (Pande & Moore, 2015). Therefore, more so than in western cultures, it is believed that women must have the opportunity to mentor and be mentored by other women rather than men, which would then also facilitate role modeling, one of the ways of ensuring formalized mentoring (Haynes & Ghosh, 2012). Sugiyama, Cavanagh, van Esch, Bilimoria, and Brown (2016) reported that women leadership development programs are valuable because they connect knowing, development of the relational self, and relational and identity-based leadership approaches that are more prevalent in these programs than in those that are not women-specific. Women in senior management should be encouraged to serve as mentors so that they can provide psychosocial support to aspiring woman executives and reduce their attrition. Succession planning can be better managed if woman mentors are assigned to young women executives (Sahoo & Lenka, 2016). However, a woman-woman mentor-protégé relationship is comparatively rare due to a lack of women in higher level management positions, and so women often opt for a cross-gender mentorship. But, in doing so, they may be less comfortable because of issues such as increased public scrutiny and rumors of romantic involvement (Batra & Reio, 2016). The senior manager in the corporate sector indicated in her interview that, in a strong men-dominated culture, especially in the engineering profession in India, the first step in assigning Indian men protégés to senior women mentors is to help them be comfortable enough to work with a woman leader. Providing diversity training, gender equality information, and introducing the concept of equal opportunity can act as starting points.

To help overcome problems that are common in traditional dyadic mentoring relationships, alternatives are suggested in the form of developmental networks. Multiple mentoring relationships will be misconstrued less as sexually motivated and come under less public scrutiny as compared to a single dyadic mentoring relationship (Ghosh & Haynes, 2008). Organizations should encourage development of primary

mentoring relationships and multiple secondary relationships that span the gender dyadic possibilities. Further, these relationships can occur across functional, departmental, and organizational boundaries (Haynes & Ghosh, 2012). Among all the available career development resources, reports of psychosocial mentoring acting as a significant predictor of subjective career outcomes, such as career commitment, career resilience, and achievement orientation, dominated this review. As the senior manager interviewed for this chapter pointed out, “it is about the personal development of the protégé and growing her self-esteem in the first place,” as women in India are challenged just to establish career goals, remain oriented to achievement, and persevere in their path to leadership.

Recommendations for Improving Women Leaders’ Career Development in India

Tiwari, executive director of CEO Clubs India, wrote, “if we want India’s massive population and economic growth to be balanced and healthy, we need to empower these women professionally” (2014, para 9). Creating women-friendly organizations will depend on the availability of career development programs. Based on the issues discussed, the following four approaches to facilitate better working conditions to support women’s career development are proposed:

- Work-life balance can help women focus on their career. Ensuring work-life balance by allocating time for family and work will help women avoid leaving workplaces because of family commitments. By helping Indian women manage work life alongside home life, both organizations and families would allow Indian women to stay in the workforce rather than dropping out (Meena, 2015). Sunita Cherian, vice-president of HR at Wipro in India, noted the company’s role in meeting the changing priorities of women employees in various stages of their lives. For instance, Wipro provides flexible work hours to married women employees. Wipro also makes an effort to persuade their

- woman employees not to leave, even if they are tempted to depend on their partner's income and quit their job (Malhotra, 2013).
- Women have moved from the confinement of the four walls of their home life to successful career paths. Managers should reconsider the reliance on gender-specific roles in society. Women need to be aware of their capabilities. Often women workers in organizations support the stereotypical thinking about the leadership capability of men and women, making it more difficult for women to be successful leaders. Srimathi Shivashankar, in charge of practicing gender diversity in HCL Technology in India, affirmed that, as a woman employee, she had to work harder than others in climbing the success ladder (Malhotra, 2013).
 - A significant number of studies, as well as the women leaders interviewed for this chapter, indicated that Indian professional women have strong preferences for policies and provisions, such as gender bias reduction, women-friendly office infrastructure (such as sufficient women's restrooms and nursing facilities), flexible working hours, childcare and elder care facilities, wellness, and professional and personal development programs (Buddhapriya, 2009; Haq, 2013; Sahoo & Lenka, 2016). Human Resource Development (HRD) has a critical role to play in addressing these issues through emphasis on continuous skills acquisition, training, executive coaching, and mentoring.
 - Finally, formal mentoring as a HRD initiative should be implemented to stimulate a supportive and nurturing network allowing women to envision future leadership potential and accomplish their career goals.

Recommendations for Future Research

“If India is to become the world's third largest economy in 2030, it can't afford to continue bypassing its over 600 million women from equal opportunity in the workforce” (Surie, 2016, p. 3). Career development research is not well established for women in India. Several quantitative and qualitative studies would add to our knowledge of how career development can enhance opportunities for women in leadership in India. Some possible research could include studying how Indian organizations need to adapt to the needs of women workers in order to help with their

career development, how the role of culture and gender impacts the career development of women in India, and how the role of societal culture impacts the Indian corporate culture and women's career development. Lastly, future studies can look into how HRD can help in creating a shift, with the use of coaching, to change mindsets that hinder women's career development in India.

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Part II

Signs of Hope

This part sheds light on the policies and legislations, educational opportunities, and the cross-sector partnerships and collaborations that are being developed in India for the benefit of women leadership development and success.



5

Policies and Legislation for Indian Women Leaders

Soumi Rai and Shalini Gopalkrishnan

This chapter focuses on policies and legislation enacted by the Government of India (GoI) for women and their implications for women's leadership in India. Given the vastness and diversity of India and stereotypes that have been embedded in local cultures across millennia, waiting for society to change and empower women would be a fantasy. One way to influence society to fast forward such impact is through governmental policies and legislation.

We examined documents from the GoI, scholarly articles in the field, and analytical reports by various national and international commissions. This chapter examines legislation and policies from Independence (1947) to around 1975 and then post 1975 when the focus shifted strongly toward women's welfare. It also looks at selected schemes implemented at

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both the Union and state government levels in India that seek to empower women economically at grassroots levels and provide them with support toward living a life with dignity and security. We conclude with broad implications of these policies and schemes and make recommendations for additional government actions needed.

Though the GoI has promulgated equality for women since Independence and the late 1970s brought an era of empowerment for women leaders with the United Nation's declaration of the Year of Women and the Mexico Plan (UN's first world conference on the status of women in 1975), progress on this front has been slow. An indicator of this slow progress is that the ratio of women to men increased to only 945:1000 in 2017 from 930:1000 in 1971. Though the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the constitution, and there is the precedence of the dominant Hindu culture empowering women even as far back as the Vedic times (Alterkar, 1956), women's empowerment has not been a priority in modern times.

The plethora of policies and laws going back a century shows that, even if legislation exists, society moves at a very slow pace. In addition to equality, the Constitution also empowers states to create measures for positive discrimination for women (achieved via quotas or affirmative actions). Its aims are to ensure that the focus is on results and equality is achieved (Norris, 2001). More than 30 acts and laws have been enacted in the past century relating to women. The focus of these laws has been on positive discrimination and prevention, such as the Sati (Prevention) Act of 1987 or the Equal Remuneration Act 1976.

The Constitution also imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen to renounce all practices derogatory to the dignity of women: "to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women" (Article 51A(e)). While India has made progress in gender-related areas, with life expectancy for women having increased from 31.6 years in 1951 to 69.9 years (World Health Organization—WHO, 2015) and literacy rates having gone from 38.19% in 1951 to 65.46% as per the Census Survey 2011, the gap between men and women in these two areas still remains wide (Mathews, 2001).

Legislation and Policies by the Union Government of India

Prior to Independence, policies enacted to empower women focused on giving women basic rights. These laws included the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 that allowed women to remarry after their husband's death and the Native Marriage Act in 1872 that allowed inter-caste marriage to be valid and disallowed polygamy. The Hindu Women's Right to Property Acts in 1929 and 1937 were aimed at making widows economically independent. As in so many areas in India, however, the execution of these laws has not always been good.

In 1947, after India received independence from the British, several laws were enacted covering marriage and inheritance. These include the Special Marriage Act of 1954 and the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 that codified the rules of marriage and also covered divorce and separation (amended in 1966), the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 that gave women the right to inherit equally, and the Married Women Property Act of 1974. Other acts have been the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971, and the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961, amended in 2017.

The Minimum Wages Act was passed in 1948. In addition, the GoI introduced labor laws to ensure humane conditions, maternity benefits, and laws to end exploitation of women and children against immoral trafficking in 1956, updated in 1986. To improve opportunities for women, the GoI also formulated policies for social and economic development for women to participate effectively in society. Articles 14, 15, and 16 of the Indian Constitution encourage equality in various spheres in society. Article 15, Section 3, prohibits discrimination and enables the state to offer positive discrimination in favor of women.

India adopted constitutional privileges, fundamental rights, and directive policies as focused measures for neutralizing the cumulative socio-economic, political, and educational disadvantages that have been faced by Indian women as an initial step toward women's empowerment. India ratified various international conventions committed to securing equal rights for women, key among them being the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Amongst Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

In 1974, the Minister of Welfare and Education in India commissioned researchers to determine the status of women under Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. The study (Committee on the Status of Women in India, published in the Towards Equality Report, 1974) found that there was a huge gap in implementation of laws and policies and large numbers of women were not impacted by these laws, especially those in rural India, with only those in urban India impacted (Majumdar, Sharma, & Sujaya, 1974).

A turnaround year for Indian women was 1975. The first status report on women in India was submitted by the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) on January 1, 1975, to the Ministry for Education and Social Welfare, GoI. This was also the year when the United Nations (UN) heralded the first ever International Women's Year. Ironically, the same year when India was trying to understand the status of women in the post-Independence era, India's first woman prime minister, Indira Gandhi, declared an emergency, suspending all fundamental rights accorded to Indian citizens under the Constitution. It was ironic as, while the CSWI in its report highlighted that, even after two decades of Independence, there was persistent disparity in the status accorded to women in India in terms of constitutional, legal, and administrative provisions, there was a declaration of an emergency by an Indian women leader, the highest level of empowerment (administrative and legal) reflected by an Indian woman, which earned her the title of the Iron Lady of India. This position, held by a woman, was not conceivable in a country known for gender disparity.

By the middle of the 1970s, the National Plan for Women was adopted, and it became the main treatise for women until 1988 when the National Perspective Plan for Women was formulated. The Minister of State for Women, Youth Affairs, and Sport, Margaret Alva, spearheaded this plan and made over 350 recommendations covering "a uniform civil code, property rights to women, reservation of seats for women in elected bodies, banning of sex-determination tests, and making harassment of wives for dowry as a ground for seeking divorce" (National Perspective Plan 1988). Furthermore, coming under pressure to become a part of the global economy, the Indian government ratified the Mexico Plan for Action in 1975 for empowering women.

In addition to legislation, the GoI created policies and autonomous bodies that were based on the National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001, and its updated draft of 2016 with recommendations for the future. These autonomous bodies include the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD); the National Commission for Women (NCW), whose agenda is to recommend legislation after reviewing constitutional and legal protections and advise the government on policies for women; and the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), whose mission is to build capacity and empower women and raise awareness of their legal rights. These boards have the power to create policy and make suggestions for empowering women.

Government of India: Five-Year Plans

India embarked on Five-Year Plans for a variety of reasons. One reason relevant for this chapter was that the GoI needed to intervene to achieve socially desirable objectives with its resources. As India was a young country, the Five-Year Plans were a way to achieve goals systematically.

The First Five-Year Plan focused on the welfare of women, while, in the second, *mahila mandals* (women's groups) at the grassroots level were created for the development of women. The next two plans focused on education. In the fifth plan, training of women who needed income and protection was emphasized. In the sixth plan, the focus shifted from welfare to development to give women access to resources. The seventh plan focused on softer skills, such as inculcating self-confidence in women. In the Eighth Five-Year Plan, women's empowerment was included as one of the primary goals for the country. The ninth plan earmarked over 30% of funds for women-focused programs. By the tenth plan, suggestions on the national policy of empowerment of women were incorporated. The 11th and 12th plans also focused on inclusive growth for women. The current plan focuses on *beti bachao* (save the girl child) and special benefits in terms of job quotas for single women.

Despite this legislation, even in the government there were instances when there was a flagrant reversal of rules, such as in June 1970 when the Chief Minister (CM) of Uttar Pradesh (UP) (Shri Chaudhary Charan Singh) asked the government not to have women in the IAS—Indian

Administrative Service (the prestigious branch of bureaucrats of the government)—and if they insisted, then they should not send any to his state (Sharma, Hussain, & Saharya, 1984). The government did not send any woman to the UP cadre while Charan Singh was the CM, which lasted eight months in 1970. Ironically, India's Prime Minister at that point was a woman, and three years earlier, UP had a woman CM.

Special Focus on Women and Child Development by the Government of India

In 2006, the GoI established a separate department termed the MWCD with a specific focus on holistic development of women and children through the formulation of plans, policies, and enactment/amendment of legislation to further the advancement of women and children. With specific reference to women, the ministry coordinates various schemes across different government departments to promote social and economic empowerment, mainstreaming gender concerns, and facilitating legislation that empowers women to live with dignity, contributing as equal partners in an environment free of violence and discrimination. A summary of some important schemes being undertaken at central (Union GoI) and state (under aegis of GoI) levels is given below.

***Swavalamban* [Self-Reliance]**

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), in conjunction with a number of ministries under the GoI coordinated by the MWCD, launched this scheme in 1982. The agency provided support for this scheme until 1997; thereafter, the GoI has been running it on its own funds. The main objective of this scheme is to provide training and skills to women from poor and needy families or marginalized/deprived sections of the society (scheduled caste or scheduled tribes/minorities), enabling them to avail employment or be self-employed on a sustainable basis and to support themselves and even to support their families in difficult circumstances. From 2006, this specific scheme has been transferred to state governments and is being run as a state-sponsored scheme for effective implementation, evaluation, and monitoring.

Support for Training and Employment Programs for Women (STEP)

India faces an issue with low women workforce participation. NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) 2011–2012 data depicted a significant reduction in the women labor force participation rate from 33.3% in 2009–2010 to 25.3% in 2011–2012 in rural areas and from 16.6% in 2009–2010 to 14.7% in 2011–2012 in urban areas for women between the ages of 15 and 24 years (Kapsos, Silberman, & Bourmpoula, 2014).

The STEP scheme is a central sectoral scheme that was implemented in 1986–1987 and has since then been addressing occupational aspirations of poor women who do not have the provision of undergoing formal skill training. The objectives of the scheme are to provide skills that give employability to women from poor and marginalized sections of the society and to provide competencies and skills that enable such women to be self-employed/entrepreneurs. The competencies and skills imparted under STEP are generally related to traditional trades in the informal sector. The emphasis is to increase the self-employability of such women by providing assistance through various action-oriented projects. Some of the sectors in which STEP trains poor and marginalized women are agriculture, horticulture, food processing, handlooms, handicrafts, gems and jewelry making, travel and tourism, hospitality, computer and IT services, and so on.

Swa-Shakti [Self-Power]

To achieve the objective of women's empowerment, the GoI, in conjunction with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank, launched this special scheme in October 1999 culminating successfully in 2005. The primary objective of this scheme was to bring about socio-economic development of women by empowering women's self-help groups (SHGs) through micro-credit and income-generation activities with community-based interventions and support. The scheme aimed at inculcating savings and credit habits among women in rural areas, providing training for vocational skills, and being a converging point for health, nutrition, and sanitation activities. It was implemented in 57

districts, creating 17,000 SHGs and covering about 2 million women in rural areas and small towns of India.

***Swayamsiddha* [Self-Reliant]**

This scheme was launched by the GoI in 2001 as an Integrated Women's Empowerment Program with an objective to empower women both socially and economically, allowing them to be self-reliant and live their lives with dignity. The program not only stressed access to micro-credit for women, but also emphasized educating women about their status, rights, and privileges, while making them aware of women's health, nutrition, education, sanitation, and hygiene. The scheme was implemented in 650 blocks across the country, creating 67,000 women SHGs and benefiting about 9 million women in rural areas. The scheme replaced the earlier *Mahila Yojana* [Women Scheme] and culminated in 2007.

***Mahila E-Haat* [Women E-Marketplace]**

This bilingual portal was launched in 2016 by MWCD as a unique online direct marketing platform supporting women entrepreneurs/SHGs and non-government organizations (NGOs) in showcasing their products/services to vendors/buyers. This portal leverages technology in connecting vendors and suppliers directly through this unique platform, thus eliminating third parties in the middle and enhancing business efficiency for women entrepreneurs.

***Beti* [Girl Child] *Bachao Beti Padhao* [Save the Girl Child and Support Her Education]**

India faces declining child sex ratio (CSR), defined as the number of girls per 1000 boys. As per the Census survey 2011, the CSR stood at 940 (average across states and union territories), indicating a major cause of women's disempowerment in the country, as there is ongoing social discrimination of girls in the country by selective elimination

of girls through socially deplorable practices like abortion of female fetuses. Keeping in mind this reducing CSR, the GoI with the Ministry of Family Welfare, the MWCD, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development implemented this specific scheme as a joint effort aimed at survival, protection, and empowerment of girls. The objectives of the scheme are prevention of gender-biased selective sex elimination (abortion of female fetuses), ensuring survival and protection of girls, ensuring education, and participation of girls in the workforce. This scheme is being implemented on a war footing as a national campaign across 100 districts (including states and union territories) low in CSR by the GoI.

Selected State Government-Sponsored Schemes

In this section, we outline some specific schemes that have been conceptualized and implemented by various state governments in India under the state sponsorship budget allocated for the development of women under each state government. It may be noted that state governments in India are operationally responsible for running all central government schemes (GoI schemes) at their state levels; however, they also have the power to sponsor and implement specific schemes that do not duplicate central schemes, yet seek to address core issue of women and child development through state-level budget allocations.

Kerala: Kerala State Women's Development Corporation (KSWDC) Career Orientation Programs

A finishing school termed REACH (Resource Enhancement Academy for Career Heights) was initiated in 2009, empowering young women to fine tune their life-skills, ignite their passion, and build their confidence to pursue professional career opportunities. The program has been immensely successful in building mature women professionals with placement at reputed organizations across the state. Kerala State Women's

Development Corporation (KSWDC), in collaboration with the NIIT (National Institute of Information Technology), has trained about 1,016 graduate women in over 40 colleges since 2011 in certificate courses related to Information Technology (PC and hardware maintenance, and BPO—business process outsourcing services). Currently, a postgraduate course in Banking Operations is being run for career training of banking professionals.

KSWDC *Sandesh* (Communication and Network) One: Social Enterprises Network Scheme

Launched in 2015, the scheme named *Sandesh* is a unique social entrepreneurship development program based on the public-private-partnership (PPP) model that envisages creation of women entrepreneurs in all 1000 local bodies of the state and a rural access point for developmental solutions by setting up of a Sandesh One Centre in each local body. The selected women entrepreneurs undergo a four-month training program by IIMA (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad) with an infrastructure provided by Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) focused on developing their entrepreneurship skills, knowledge management capabilities, and other related aspects.

Karnataka: *Stree Shakti* [Women Empowerment] Scheme

Launched in 2000–2001, the objective of this scheme is to empower rural women by making them self-reliant through a habit of saving and proper utilization of financial resources. The scheme creates SHGs in rural areas, engaging rural women in income-generation activities, and improving their lives through training programs on gender issues, leadership, communication skills, bookkeeping, and credit management. The scheme to date has organized 2 million rural women under SHGs with savings of approximately 72 million Indian rupees through these members.

Women's Financial Assistance Schemes

Various schemes have been launched since 2001–2002 that provide financial assistance in the form of fees, scholarships, and hostel fees to women from the lower strata of the society for pursuing job-oriented or skills-development short-term courses. There have been successive modifications in objectives aimed at the welfare and empowerment of such women especially for law training.

Gujarat: Gujarat Women Economic Development Corporation (GWEDC)

The Gujarat Women Economic Development Corporation (GWEDC), an autonomous entity under the Government of Gujarat, was established in 1981 with an objective of creating awareness, providing skills development, encouraging self-employment for women, and marketing of goods/services produced/provided by women entrepreneurs in the state of Gujarat. It provides financial assistance for 217 economic activities, including vocational training and marketing support through exhibition-cum-sales for women SHGs and entrepreneurs.

Goa: Incentive to Women Entrepreneurs Scheme

This scheme was launched by the government of Goa in 2008 to encourage women to start their own industry for self-employment. The scheme provides a local employment subsidy, an interest subsidy, and benefits under special capital contribution schemes of the Government of Goa. Eligibility is for industries with 100% women ownership or with at least 51% partnership in a business where the other 49% is not held by a husband, father, brother, or son.

Puducherry (Union Territory): Women Entrepreneur Schemes

The Government of Puducherry runs two schemes for women entrepreneurs: *Mahila Udyam Nidhi* and *Magalir Udavi*. *Mahila Udyam Nidhi* provides a term loan of 65% and a seed capital of 25% of the project cost. *Magalir Udavi* is a scheme for project costs not exceeding INR 0.2 million in which a term loan covers 75% of the project cost.

Autonomous Bodies Under MWCD

We have detailed here some autonomous bodies that fall under the aegis of MWCD that support economic empowerment of women and their development for self-employed leadership positions.

National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW): Autonomous Body Under Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), GoI

This Mission was formally launched on International Women's Day (March 8) 2010 by MWCD, GoI. The Mission acts as the main agency with a mandate to strengthen inter-sectoral convergence, facilitating the process of coordinating all women's welfare and socio-economic development schemes across different ministries and departments. It has been christened as *Mission Poorna Shakti* [Mission for Total Empowerment], acting as a single resource and service center for all programs run under the aegis of central ministries for development of women.

Schemes and Programs by NMEW

The schemes and programs of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) are based on the National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001. There are different domain areas that NMEW monitors

under its inter-sectoral approach in achieving social empowerment, economic empowerment, and gender equality in the country:

- Poverty alleviation and economic empowerment of women
- Social empowerment and education
- Health and nutrition
- Gender rights, gender-based violence, and law enforcement
- Gender budgeting (preparing budgets based on gender sensitivity), gender mainstreaming, and gender auditing
- Empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized groups and women in difficult circumstances

The GoI has set up *Poorna Shakti Kendras* [Total Empowerment Centers] as a focal action center for women at the grassroots level (rural women) who may have easy access to different schemes and programs being run for their benefit, livelihood support, and empowerment. These centers generate information and provide awareness of legal rights and entitlements, while also providing training and capacity building for leadership development for self-sustenance and economic empowerment.

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK): Autonomous Body Under MWCD, GoI

RMK was established in 1993 as an autonomous body under MWCD with a clear mandate to work toward socio-economic empowerment of women. RMK operates as a central facilitation agency that provides loans to intermediary micro-finance organizations (operated by NGOs) that further lend to women SHGs for capacity development of poor and marginalized women. RMK thus provides loans to women in the informal sector (a sector that is unorganized with easy entry, small scale of operations, cash based, with a lack of formal employer-employee relationships like home-based work or street vendors) through intermediaries with backward and forward linkages, enabling micro-credit without collateral and in a hassle-free manner for income-generation activities. RMK currently also operates

a special package for poor and marginalized women from the northeastern region of India, enabling intermediaries (voluntary agencies) to make easy credit facilities available, in line with the GoI's focus on development of the northeastern region. RMK provides various types of credit, the key being loan promotion schemes, working capital term loans, refinancing, gold loans (a major source of economic security for families in India), franchisees, housing loans, and entrepreneurship development.

Impact of the Legislation and Policies

Over the decades, while the government has enacted many policies, there has been limited focus on passing legislation that focuses on women's leadership. The National Commission for Women Act (1990) emphasized safeguards for women, but only one of its 14 sub-clauses focused on ensuring advancement of women in all spheres and on socio-economic development of women (Arya, 2016). The Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (2014) encompasses prevention, prohibition, and redress action that promotes the dignity of a woman. This gives women realization of their rights to gender equality, liberty, and security for increased participation in the workforce, a step toward economic empowerment and inclusive growth (Singla & Kumar, 2014).

Has any of this produced any impact on women's participation and leadership? In the first Lok Sabha (1952–1957, the House of the people or the lower house of the bicameral Indian parliament, where representatives are directly elected), there was only 4.4% women's representation. In 2009, the 10% mark was passed for the first time since Independence (Upadhyay, 2010). The current Lok Sabha has reached the highest yet at 12.2%. So, there has been an impact, albeit small, of various policies and legislation that have been formulated and implemented by the GoI over a sustainable timeframe of 20 plus years since the deliberate focus on women's empowerment, development, welfare, and support initiated through the Eighth Five-Year Plan. The other important fact is that the number of women's contestants in the political sphere has increased 15-fold since 1957 compared to 5 times for men (Rao, 2016). The current administration has six women in cabinet positions, again the highest

so far. This is heartening, though there had been hopes with the Women Reservation Bill, 2008, mandating 33.3% women quota in parliament, passed by the Upper House of the Indian Parliament (*Rajya Sabha*) in 2010; however, the bill was never passed by the Lower House (*Lok Sabha*) and lapsed in 2014. This bill was crucial and remains a longstanding demand by women's groups in the country as a strong step needed to bring gender equality at the highest decision-making levels through active involvement of women leaders in Parliament.

Interventions by the GoI have enabled women leaders to emerge and thrive from grassroots levels to corporate/public institution levels. Though India has improved in global rankings from 114 of 142 countries in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report to 87th of 144 in 2016; ironically, it is ranked 15th among 115 nations for political empowerment of women (as politicians). In spheres such as the Judiciary, 10% of judges are women, which is marginal but a positive trend. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (a government branch looking to decentralize governance through village councils) survey in 2008 established that, at the village council level, some states, such as Bihar, had over 50% women in *panchayats* (village councils), with the average being 37% participation of women across India. Data suggest that India today has over 1.4 million women panchayat leaders, an indicator that women are taking leadership positions at the grassroots levels. This implies that this will be beneficial in reducing gender disparity in decision-making at village council levels and encourage women from marginalized sections of the society to have better access to education, health care, sanitation, and financial empowerment (Accountability India, 2008).

The Companies Act (2013) brought in the regulatory push to have at least one woman on the board for listed companies, especially public companies with revenues of more than 3 billion or more. A further amendment by Revised Clause 49 mandated this to be done by April 2015. Implications of such a regulatory push by the GoI is being reflected in increasing participation of women at board levels; as of 2015, there was 7.7% representation of women on company boards of listed companies (Deloitte, 2015).

With the advent of technology and social media, we envision more empowerment of women through effective leveraging of technology tools

such as smartphones and applications. Policies such as Make in India aim to encourage more grassroots level women entrepreneurs, having started with a Women Village Level Entrepreneur Conference in 2015 Digital India (Muntazir, 2015); Arogya Saathi that assists women entrepreneurs in providing preventive health care at the doorstep; Skill India that aims to train women for business and entrepreneurial skills for financial empowerment; and Smart Cities promulgated by the current government with positive steps for empowering women. The Draft National Policy for Women Empowerment 2016 states that the government will review all legislation and harmonize them, making concerted efforts to implement the laws using tools of information and communication technology.

Future Legislation Needed

Specific provisions in the law that seek to outlaw marital rape is an area that is in need of legislation due to the issue of forced sex in marriage that effectively takes away the right of choice from a woman. As of now the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) provides some modicum of relief in case of even sexual aggression by the husband, but it is not a comprehensive act that addresses the pertinent issue of marital rape. In addition, there also needs to be a provision that works toward removing legal protection for military personnel (AFSPA—Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in cases of rape (Kentish, 2017; Sirnate, 2014). The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act passed by the *Rajya Sabha* (upper house) in 2016 was a welcome addition providing 26 weeks' leave for maternity; however, the same provisions of leave need to be applicable to mothers who are opting for adoption of a child under three months (Prakash & Bhide, 2017). The 2017 bill's second amendment for the right to free and compulsory education, which is still pending and which states that all students have to complete elementary education (and if they fail, they need to be provided additional instruction), needs to be passed, thus making every girl child literate. Other needed policies include encouragement for women entrepreneurship ventures with easier

access to markets and capital. There is need to monitor participation of women on governing bodies with consequences for non-fulfillment. Gender sensitization training needs to be mandated beyond what is currently done at all judicial, police, and government bodies and mandated in the private sector. Another law that needs to be enhanced is the Prevention and Protection of Women from Public Dehumanization and Stigmatization Atrocities Bill, 2014, as espoused by the NCW and the Prevention of Crimes in the Name of Honor and Tradition Bill, 2010.

In terms of empowerment, women in several states need to be acknowledged as farmers so that they have access to capital and markets and become self-sufficient. Land rights for rural women need to be improved and implemented. Some older laws, such as the Succession Act, need to be expanded to all states, including Goa. The government should change the marital property law so that both spouses have co-ownership of property acquired during the marriage (Brown & Chowdhury, 2002).

Our research on continued efforts by the GoI at various levels depicts that, while on paper policies have been formulated and legislation enacted, the major issue is with the execution of the policies in reducing gender disparity in a country with a patriarchal orientation and a society that is heavily gender skewed with abhorrent practices, such as female infanticide and selective sex elimination (abortion). Sirnate (2014) lamented the poor implementation and execution of good laws or policies in the context of the Indian legal system. She highlighted the case of self-governing community law-making bodies that operate at rural levels, the self-styled *khap panchayats* or kangaroo courts issuing dictates that challenge the laws of the land. These self-styled kangaroo courts go to the extent of meting out punishments for gang rapes or sexual assaults and even honor killing for failure to comply with the rules of the particular community; for example, punishing marriage outside of the community and elopement. In such cases, it is again women who suffer as orders by the kangaroo courts act as socially sanctioned approval for such heinous acts. Herein lies the failure of the GoI in creating legislation and policies for empowerment of women. The mechanisms of law and order are ineffective in dealing with such self-styled local courts that command political clout by caste-based voting. Caste-based voting holds considerable

influence for political parties as an entire caste may be dictated to vote for a particular political party, thus ensuring victory for the candidate belonging to the selected political party. For example, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, the *Yadav* peasant-pastoral community gives preference to voting for the Samajwadi Party, led by Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav based on caste equations.

Kapur (2017) described the failed implementation of the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme outlines. Despite claims by the GoI of success stories of the scheme, CAG's (Controller of Auditor General-India) report on Social, General, and Economic sectors in the states of Haryana and Punjab showed that the ratio of girls to boys has declined from 892 per 1000 boys in 2015 to 881 in 2016. The ambitious target of 100% enrollment of girls in schools has also not been achieved. The diversion of funds and lack of a reliable monitoring mechanism seem to be the root cause of this failure. Of the total amount of 430 million allocated to this scheme in the fiscal year 2016–2017, only 50 million has been correctly utilized, according to the report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development. There also seems to be an immense issue related to the coordination of the scheme among the central, state, and local government agencies, leading to several glitches and manipulation of data at each level.

The draft National Policy for Women 2016 notes that redistribution of gender roles is imperative to bring about increased participation of women in the workforce and ensure their active participation in the country's economic progress, so they can ultimately move into leadership roles. Presently, Indian women, especially those in rural areas and from marginalized sections of society, shoulder the double burden of earning for the family while taking care of unpaid family responsibilities, such as childcare and eldercare without any semblance of organized support. To ensure participation of such women at grassroots levels, to empower them as entrepreneurs, and to ensure their participation as leaders in decision-making roles, there is need for major transformation in the thought process of Indian society that should look at a girl child with dignity rather than the skewed perspective of being a burden to society (Kapsos et al., 2014). To achieve this end, the GoI needs to focus

more on increasing the literacy level of girl children and actively involve its policies and schemes related to continued education of women at both tertiary and secondary levels. Also, more focus is needed to create family-friendly work policies, such as using parental leaves instead of just maternity leaves (in line with countries such as Sweden) that enable both partners to share childcare responsibilities in both organized and unorganized sectors, thus supporting economic progression of women while managing work-life balance.

Other provisions that we expect the GoI to focus on in support of empowerment of women include acceptance of the emergence of different categories of women in society, such as single mothers, surrogate mothers, separated women, divorced mothers, and same-gender relationships (currently illegal); thereby focusing on creation of policies that seek to protect the dignity of such women, effectively availing them of security and protection against fraud and violence and ensuring their continued participation in the economic progress of the country as a formidable workforce.

Conclusion

In summary, we believe that future implications and the effects of policies and legislation for the empowerment of women can be successful only if the GoI adopts a multipronged perspective, viz., sensitize society, policy-makers, statutory bodies, and organizations about the need for gender-inclusive workplaces, not from the lens of egalitarianism but from the practical perspective of benefits that can accrue from shedding stereotypical social and organizational identities and roles; sensitizing women and counseling them to bring about a sea change in their outlook on their social roles and identities by availing more information and access to GoI policies and schemes for financial empowerment and inclusiveness; and, last, focusing on effective execution of policies/schemes in crucial areas, such as education, preventive health care, and women's security and welfare to support the steady progression and amalgamation of women in the mainstream economy and their aspirations for leadership roles.

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6

Role of Education in Developing Women Leaders in India

Malar Hirudayaraj and Priyanka Doshy

Women's participation in leadership is dependent on multiple factors, such as societal structure, cultural norms, political rights, civil liberties, economic condition, business environment, and developmental and educational infrastructures available within the context of a nation (O'Neil, Plank, & Domingo, 2015; Puddington, 2008; World Bank, 2007). While each of these factors influences the emergence of women leaders, in this chapter we focus specifically on the role of education in developing women leaders in India. First, we establish the relationship between access to education and leadership development of women in general to highlight the importance and demonstrate the benefits of education in developing nations. Then, we examine the factors that restrict women's access to education in India and describe the history of women's access to

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education in the country. Next, we present the factors that enabled women's access to education and thereby to leadership. In the last section, we argue that increasing access to higher education for women creates the potential for leadership but will not automatically result in the emergence of women leaders without other enabling factors and that leadership development of women needs to be intentional within academia for it to be sustainable.

Role of Education in Leadership Development of Women in Developing Nations

This section demonstrates the importance of education, especially in developing nations such as India. Formal and informal educational experiences provide a foundation for women to develop their potential as individuals and as leaders (CARE, 2012). Education plays a vital role in creating opportunities for developing leadership capabilities in young women through curricular and extracurricular activities. Schools provide motivation and opportunities for girls to learn leadership skills, reinforce gender equality, and have a space to define and articulate beliefs, values, and life expectations (Sperandio, 2010). By offering possibilities for young women to be class prefects, monitors, and sports captains, schools strengthen and develop their confidence, self-esteem, decision-making skills, and influencing skills (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). In addition, the educational environment also encourages aspirations of young women by presenting access to role models in the form of teachers and school administrators (Beaman, Duflo, Pande, & Topalova, 2012). Exposure to women who have broken barriers and made significant contributions in politics, governance, education, social justice, literature, the arts, and science gives women hope to persevere with their dreams and aspirations (Beaman et al., 2012). Nevertheless, access to education is not guaranteed for all young girls in India. In the next sections, we explore the history of women's access to education in India and how it limits or enables Indian women in their journey toward leadership.

Factors That Have Restrained Access to Education and Leadership Development of Women in India

In a highly stratified society like India, the intersectionality of caste, patriarchy, geographic location (rural or urban), and poverty has historically restricted access to education for women (Chitrakar, 2009; World Bank, 2007). Access to formal and informal education in turn influences leadership aspirations and leadership development opportunities for women. One of the primary social factors that obstructs access to education for both genders in India is the social system of caste (World Bank, 2007). Perhaps the oldest form of social stratification that has survived into the twenty-first century, the caste system is a system of graded inequality in which people are classified based on descent into groups with differing access to power and status. Unlike the class system, which is based on economic differences between groups and inequalities of possession and control over material resources, the caste system is based on birth into a group. Furthermore, while the class system also stratifies society, it is fluid and offers mobility. The caste system is a closed system of stratification that denies mobility. That is, if one is born into a particular caste, one remains there regardless of one's potential or circumstances; a movement out of a particular caste into which one is born is not possible.

Under the caste system, historically, people were divided into four major groups based on their family of birth and their occupation: the *Brahmins*, the *Kshatriyas*, the *Vaishya*, and the *Sudras* in descending order of power, status, and authority. Each of these four groups was then subdivided into thousands of sub-castes. Those born into castes higher in the hierarchy were allowed access to education, ownership of land and property, and power over those who were lower in the social order; and those who were born into castes that were relegated to the lower rung of the social order were denied access to resources, including education (World Bank, 2007). Women born into castes that are in the lower rung of the hierarchy have been the most restricted in terms of educational opportunities (World Bank, 2007).

In addition to the caste system, factors such as patriarchy, religion, geographic location, poverty, and cultural traditions, like early marriage of girls, have further restricted access to education for women for centuries (World Bank, 2007). Most recent literature on women's education in India discusses the state of women's education post-Independence, that is, 1947 and beyond. However, it is important to understand that Indian women did have access to education centuries ago (1500–1100 BCE). During this early Vedic period, women were considered to be equal to men and received the same education as men and also participated in the same debates as men (Suguna, 2011). Women were initiated into reading, writing, and arithmetic, and were schooled in Hindu theology and scripture, performed religious rites, and participated in political affairs. In fact, the traditional marriage hymn included reference to the wish that women be able to speak in public gatherings. Rituals were expected to be performed in order to have a female offspring with scholarly leaning. Women in the Vedic period were also teachers of the Vedas (scripture), and women made a name for themselves as philosophers and debaters.

However, during the later Vedic period (1100–500 BCE), the Brahmins, who were at the top of the caste-based hierarchy, followed a rigid system of patriarchy, and, as a result, women lost the equality they enjoyed during the early Vedic period. In the predominantly patrilineal Hindu society, men were the head of the household, with women being considered subordinate to her father, then her husband, and later her son. In the medieval age (eighth to eighteenth century), Hindu parents saw girl children as a burden and a transit element until she was married off into another family in which her primary roles were that of wife, mother, daughter-in-law, and homemaker. Expending resources in raising a girl child was like watering someone else's lawn, and, therefore, parents of girls did not see the necessity to provide them with formal education. As a result, women's access to education was restricted, and they lost the right to perform religious rituals and participate in political affairs. The role of women was restricted to the domestic realm, and her primary responsibility was to take care of her husband and her family. Nevertheless, women born into the aristocratic caste continued to have access to religious education and military education until about the first century BCE. By 200 CE, women were completely denied access to education, and the

situation continued well into the medieval period with the Mughal era (1526–1857). The status of women and their access to education and empowerment deteriorated during the centuries (twelfth to late nineteenth century) when the first Islamic states were established and continued into the Mughal era (1526–1857) when most of India was under Islamic rulers of Persian origin (Shrivastava, 2000). The Muslim rulers were patrons of learning, encouraged scholarship, and created opportunities for primary education (primary: grades 1–8; secondary: grades 9–12; tertiary: college), even in villages. However, due to the lower status afforded women in the society, with home being their domain and restrictions based on the purdah system (religious and social practice of seclusion of women), women could not participate in the education system. They were provided tutoring at home through the zenana system (domestic education). Women of the Muslim royalty received education from private tutors; they were literate and learned to the extent of being poets and scholars. However, access to home tutoring was not available for women of less privileged backgrounds; therefore, access to education for women outside of the royal palaces was very limited. The social status of women further deteriorated during the Muslim era as women's role was confined to the home with the prime responsibility of child rearing. Educating women, therefore, became more of an exception than the rule.

The situation began to change only during the British rule (1858–1947). Christian missionaries and Indian social leaders revived the intent to provide educational opportunities for women (Gupta, 2000; Shrivastava, 2000), set up schools for women, and actively propagated for women to receive education. Subsequently, the Indian Education Commission was set up in 1882 to emphasize women's education; nevertheless, it was not until India achieved independence from Britain's colonial rule that importance given to women's education peaked. This was a result of western-educated intellectuals who promoted the cause of equality of women and created opportunities for education for women.

Another factor that intensified the lack of parity in access to education from primary to tertiary levels into the twenty-first century is the urban/rural divide that exists in the country and is further intensifying (Chitrakar, 2009). Even today, the 70% of the population living in

villages do not have access to the same infrastructure or resources that their urban counterparts possess (Chitrakar, 2009). When poverty is added into the mix, it worsens the chances of women's access to education across the country. The direct costs (such as those for tuition, transport, and educational supplies) and the indirect costs (not being available for domestic work or not earning an income) of educating girl children, especially in rural areas, discourage poor parents from sending their daughters to school (Noorani, n.d.). Moreover, safety concerns of parents outweigh the advantages of secondary education for girls when schools are located at a distance (Noorani, n.d.). Schools with more boys than girls, high teacher-student ratios, large class sizes that prevent individual attention, poor hygiene conditions, and poor nutrition available to girls also contribute to unfavorable attitudes toward providing secondary education for girls in villages (Noorani, n.d.). Most importantly, the system of child marriage that was prevalent in rural areas until recently (Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, passed in late 2007) also prevented the continuation of education of girls. Despite consistent policies and deliberate efforts to increase the literacy of women and opportunities of education for girls, women born into lower castes and living in rural areas amidst poverty have been most affected in terms of lack of access to educational resources.

Access to education, at least through the secondary level, is vital for developing the leadership potential of women. However, access to education cannot be sustained without an enabling environment (Choeun, Sok, & Byrne, 2008). Discrimination based on gender and class, lack of family and community support, the patriarchal nature of society, family responsibilities, poverty, lack of role models and mentoring, limited opportunities to network, attitudes of society about women, and cultural definitions of acceptable behavior are all factors that restrain women from getting access to education and from aspiring to leadership roles in developing nations (O'Neil et al., 2015).

Access to formal and informal educational experiences largely determines the development of leadership in girls and young women. Not having access to education beyond the primary level (grades 1–8) and not being able to pursue secondary education (9–12), if not tertiary education (college degree), deprive girls of formal and informal opportunities

to develop a sense of agency and decision-making power that are fundamental to developing into a leader (CARE, 2012). Young girls without access to secondary education are denied possibilities to increase their sense of self-worth, enhance their confidence, develop a vision for their lives and their communities, take initiatives, and grow the motivation to influence others to make a difference (O'Neil et al., 2015). However, with continuing policy thrusts and changes in socio-economic conditions, the status of women and their opportunities for education and employment have considerably improved in the last 30 years (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2016; Suguna, 2011).

Facilitating Access to Education for Women in Post-Colonial India: Government Initiatives

Education became a constitutionally guaranteed right in India after Independence in 1947, and, since then, the Indian Government has developed specific policies and initiatives to increase access to education for all, especially girls (Shrivastava, 2000). The Secondary Education Commission, appointed in 1952, deemed that both sexes would have equality in the type of education they received and thereby created opportunities for women to attain educational advancement on par with men (Department for International Development, 2005). The National Policy of Education, implemented in 1986, transformed the focus of the education system from increasing access to empowering women in all aspects of life (Suguna, 2011). In addition, the 86th Amendment to the Constitution of India, enacted in 2002, guaranteed the right of children aged 6–14 to free and compulsory education, thereby creating more opportunities for girls to pursue education up to the eighth-grade level. These initiatives enabled women to achieve 65.5% literacy in 2011, an increase of about 11% from 2001 (Barman, 2015; Nair, 2010). Though the growth in women's literacy rate seems to have been rather slow, growing from a mere 0.7% in 1901 is a major achievement (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2015).

Further, initiatives, such as the *Mahila Samakhyā* (Education for Equality of Women) program since 1988 and the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Education for All) implemented in 2000, have transformed the lives of Indian women through education. Both programs focus on creating access to education for women, especially those in rural areas, with a goal to foster their empowerment. The *Mahila Samakhyā Program* works toward ensuring the financial, emotional, and intellectual independence of women so they can participate in all areas of life with confidence. While these two initiatives are focused on ensuring the education of women up to the secondary level, in the 1990s, the Government of India rolled out initiatives that were dedicated to creating access to higher education for women that turned out to be critical in shaping Indian women leaders (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2016; Nair, 2010).

The International Center on Research on Women (ICRW) (2005) found that secondary education is not sufficient for women to control their own destinies or to influence change within their communities any more. In the twenty-first century, leadership at levels beyond local communities in any sector—public, judiciary, legislative, private, academia, or the civil society—requires tertiary education (International Center for Research on Women: Education Briefing, 2005). Fortunately, women's access to higher education in India rose rapidly in the 1970s, following consistent policy thrusts in the post-Independence era and the accompanying changes in social and economic sectors. Many Indian women, especially those from urban areas, have taken tremendous advantage of the access to higher education in the last 40 years with enrolment of women in higher education having grown exponentially since the 1970s.

In 1993, the Ministry of Human Resource Development reported that women who attended college comprised only a third of the total of students; that is, only 1% of women had a college education compared to 3% of men (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2016; Nair, 2010). While the percentage of Indian women attending colleges has increased since 1993, the gender disparity continues with 46.2% of enrollees in higher education being women (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2016). Several initiatives were put in place to enable and encourage women to attend higher education institutions. The University Grants Commission, formed in 1956, offered financial

assistance in the form of grants, fellowships, and scholarships for women to enable women to pursue college degrees. In 2008, the Women's Reservation Bill was passed that resulted in 33% of seats in colleges and universities being reserved for women (DFID, 2014). Additionally, 11 universities and colleges were created only for women in Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, ensuring a broad geographic reach. Further, 58% of higher educational institutions were intentionally opened in rural areas, with 10.7% of these colleges being women's colleges. While 700,000 women were enrolled in higher education in 1971, by 2012–2013, there were 13,300,000 women in higher education, including 2,100,000 women from lower castes (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2014–2015).

Increasing opportunities to pursue higher education in different disciplines and advanced degrees in emerging fields, such as Information Technology, have expanded the possibilities of growth for women in the formal sector. Moreover, exposure to higher education helps women develop an understanding of the complexities of the world in which they live, enables them to learn how to solve complex problems, and provides them with opportunities to develop into positive change agents at higher levels of the society (Astin & Astin, 2000). On the one hand, discipline-specific knowledge and exposure to the latest developments gained through higher education enable women to gain credibility in a particular field. Curricular and co-curricular activities in higher education teach women to collaborate in achieving goals and navigating men-dominated work environments. This helps them develop networks that will enrich their leadership capabilities, augment their confidence, and support them in overcoming barriers to realizing their potential (International Center for Research on Women, 2005). Armed with advanced degrees and supported by opportunities for leadership development offered by their educational experiences, women in recent years have come to occupy senior leadership and management positions in many fields, such as in education, public and private sectors, not-for-profits, science and technology, space research, banking, the national stock market, and administration.

The consistent and intentional efforts by the government to create equal and accessible educational opportunities for women have been crucial in bridging the prevalent gender gap in educational attainment and

employment success (Sain & Kaware, 2013; Shrivastava, 2000). Access to higher education has led to higher participation of women in the organized labor market. As per the third and fourth annual employment-unemployment survey conducted by the Labour Bureau in October 2012 and December 2013, women's labor force participation increased from 22.6% to 25.8%. (Budhwar, Saini, & Bhatnagar, 2005; Ministry of Labour & Employment, 2016–2017).

Other Factors Enabling Women for Leadership Fostered by Higher Education

Being a leader demands a sense of agency, the belief that individuals can make a difference, a willingness to challenge the status quo, and an eagerness to apply leadership capabilities to take action in making a difference (CARE, 2009). Exposure to formal and informal educational experiences plays a vital role in developing a sense of agency, which is paramount for leadership; yet, exposure to education on its own, without the presence of a few other enabling factors, does not help women develop their leadership potential. Foremost among these enabling factors is family background. Women who grow up in stable and relatively prosperous families (Singh, 2014), with open-minded fathers and supportive brothers (Madsen, 2010; Shrivastava, 2000), are more likely to continue in education for a longer period of time and are more likely to explore leadership opportunities. Secondly, the presence of women role models in their immediate communities, exposure to women role models throughout education, and the availability of mentors to guide them in their path to leadership encourage women to aspire to higher educational attainment and careers beyond what is available within their communities (Beaman et al., 2012; Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). A supportive community (Department for International Development [DFID], 2014), nurturing relationships at school and work (Ahern, Nuti, & Masterson, 2000), social networks that enable leadership development (Ahern et al., 2000; True, 2008), and a positive organizational culture (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013) are all important elements in developing the leadership potential of women.

In the context of India, the changes in the socio-economic spheres in the latter half of the twentieth century were predominantly favorable to women. Men who were exposed to western education as a result of the British colonial rule or were provided with opportunities to study in western countries were influenced by western culture and thinking. This encouraged them to create opportunities for women in their families and immediate circles to acquire education. During the British era, men social reformers and progressive thinkers propagated for girls to be educated and for abolishment of cultural practices that prevented women from being treated as individuals or from being educated and strongly encouraged women to pursue education. They also worked to set up schools and colleges for women (Shrivastava, 2000). Women born into families with such progressive men had greater opportunities to pursue education and a career.

In addition, there was a gradual opening up of educational opportunities for women beyond the secondary level in the twentieth century; setting up of a special ministry for the welfare and development of women in the post-Independence era; and the family planning policy implemented in the early 1970s; all paved the way for greater opportunities for women. For instance, the legal marriageable age of Indian girls has gradually risen in the last 50 years and now stands at 18 (Shrivastava, 2000), thus allowing girls to stay longer in education. Since 1971, Indian women have also had access to family planning and, therefore, the option of delaying child bearing (Ibarra et al., 2013). Despite the controversies that surrounded family planning as a strategy to stabilize population growth and the backlash from certain sections, access to family planning has had the greatest impact on women in obtaining more years of formal education in India in the last 45 years (Gupta, 2013).

Policies targeted at enhancing educational opportunities for women that followed in the 1980s, the economic liberalization of the early 1990s, the ensuing employment opportunities and the consistent increase in the number of secondary schools and higher educational institutions have all created further possibilities for more women to be educated from the last three decades of the twentieth century to today. Liberalization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s opened up greater employment opportunities for young women with tertiary education (United Nations

Development Program [UNDP], 2007). Availability of increased access to post-secondary educational opportunities for women and employment possibilities in the organized sector (licensed/registered organizations required to pay taxes and provide benefits to employees) offered Indian parents more return on investment for educating girls. This, in turn, encouraged parents to delay the marriage of their daughters and allowed young women to continue in education for a longer period of time (Mukerjee, 2005).

Increased exposure to formal education in their late adolescence and early adulthood has created vast opportunities for the development of leadership potential of women in the last few decades. Girls born in the last four decades of the twentieth century, in general, had more access to education than those in the previous generations. Particularly, girls born during this period in urban and semi-urban areas or families that were favorably inclined toward girls' education spent their entire adolescence (13–18) and to an extent even their early adulthood (18–21) years in institutions of education (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2014–2015). Early adolescence is a critical period in shaping leadership skills, as this is the time during which girls develop their sense of identity and awareness about cultural norms, patriarchal structures, and societal expectations (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). Formal education during adolescence provides girls with ample opportunities to learn to negotiate their identity, cultivate self-efficacy, and develop a voice in the face of gender- and caste-based oppression (Beaman et al., 2012). Being at school provides Indian girls, especially those from rural and lower caste backgrounds, exposure to role models not available within their own families. For instance, girls are exposed to women teachers both in rural and urban areas, as approximately 46% of all teachers at the primary level and 46% of all teachers at the secondary level are women (Ministry of HRD, 2014). At the higher education level, 39% of all teachers are women (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2014). Education also provides girls with validation of their academic and social competence not often available within their families and local communities; encouragement to make choices and decisions; and courage to aspire beyond familiar boundaries (O'Neil et al., 2015). Most importantly, exposure to education during these crucial developmental years gives young women

the self-confidence and sense of idealism that is essential to challenge the status quo consistently.

In addition, it is in secondary school that girls from otherwise patriarchal homes get their initial opportunities to demonstrate and hone their leadership capabilities through curricular and co-curricular activities (O'Neil et al., 2015). Young women lead curricular projects and co-curricular teams when they can prove their ability to influence their peers, make decisions, collaborate as equals, and command the respect of young men. Girls have opportunity to participate in a variety of sports activities at all levels of education from primary to tertiary. Girls are involved in an array of track and field and team sports, such as (field) hockey, basketball, football (soccer), cricket, tennis, kabaddi, volleyball, badminton, tennis, and many other sports at the school level. They also participate in district, state, national, and international level competitions. Participation in sports at school provides girls with exposure to work in teams, collaborate, lead, strategize, and, most importantly, make decisions for the team on the field (DFID, 2014). Most schools also have National Cadet Corps (military cadet corps) that offers girls training in military drills and opportunities to hone leadership skills. Moreover, the young women who are officers in N.C.C. also function as role models for young women in schools and colleges. Such leadership opportunities available in educational environments enhance the self-esteem of young women and embed in them a sense of self-worth that could be otherwise denied in a stratified society dominated by men. Schools thus become nurturing grounds for women leaders of the future, by helping them form and establish an identity in a patriarchal environment.

A Way Forward

Policy thrusts, positive social conditioning, and initiatives at the local educational setting levels are paramount to create, nurture, and utilize the leadership potential of women in India. At the policy level, persistent intention and efforts to improve allocation of resources and opportunities for women in rural areas and those from lower castes to access education are required to reduce the disparity across genders in participation in

higher education and the labor market. Furthermore, within educational settings, leadership development will provide opportunities to internalize leadership identity and is a consistent and iterative process that is enabled by consistent positive feedback and reinforcement. Developing leadership potential of women, therefore, needs to be intentional within academia—in schools and colleges in India. At a basic level, young women need opportunities to engage in discussions about leadership—what it means to them and who they see as leaders and why. Next, they need possibilities of interacting with and observing women leaders in action to internalize the self-belief that they can be leaders, too. More importantly, they need to be helped to develop a sense of purpose with regard to leadership. For instance, an interaction with the women space scientists who led India's Mars mission or women activists, entrepreneurs, or economists could be a good starting place. The mass media could also be used effectively to create a sense of self-belief and the courage to break out of conventional fields and roles and explore leadership roles with confidence. Media could also provide role models who demonstrate a sense of agency and pave their own pathways to leadership.

Schools and colleges could expand programs, such as youth parliament, that encourage students to engage in civic leadership and offer other experiential learning opportunities whereby women take on leadership roles on an experimental basis and grow as leaders in the process. Girls can be encouraged to lead small projects in schools or within their communities, or engage in explorative activities that help them identify their strengths and potential career pathways. Teachers and family need to be intentional in creating access to mentors who can help channel their leadership potential and support the process of assuming leadership roles within academia and in their immediate communities. Small job shadowing activities within a community wherever possible or virtual job shadowing or even reading about various careers and people involved in them could provide girls with possibilities they could pursue in the future. Sharing of job shadowing or career explorative experiences in group settings within classrooms could multiply the learning and create a sense of peer support and confidence to share what they have learned. Not-for-profit organizations working within communities can also provide such

opportunities for engaging in leadership through voluntary work or in working for a cause that resonates with young women.

Most importantly, family and teacher support is vital in helping young women make decisions that determine their purpose and career and enable them to develop a sense of agency and the space to define their own goals and pathways. Education that is deliberately focused on empowering women to take charge of their lives, make decisions, influence others, and be aware of their potential is required to make a difference in the leadership development of women within educational settings in India (DFID, 2014; Suguna, 2011). Highly hierarchical, top-down institutional governance with minimal participation of students (or junior faculty members) in decision-making or practices that deny voice to women within educational settings cannot cultivate a broader base of confident women leaders. Educational institutions, therefore, need to develop the leadership capacities of women by deliberately adopting gender sensitive and empowering forms of governance. Faculty need to be reminded of their role within and outside the classroom in deepening the self-belief of their women students and honing their personal leadership capabilities. The same is true for senior faculty members in their responsibilities to mentor and develop junior faculty members, especially women. Additionally, attention to curricular quality—what is being taught and how—is required to ensure gender sensitive and critical pedagogy essential for equality of citizenship and empowerment of women. Only when political will and social transformations are backed by future-oriented and gender-sensitive culture within academic institutions and intentional practices are instituted within classrooms can there be a consistent pipeline of women leaders in India.

Future Research Needed

Many questions remain about how educational opportunities can be more effective in developing women in India for leadership. For instance, it would be fruitful to explore if and how participation in sports during school years enables Indian girls to develop leadership potential. The impact of supportive school and family environments on women's empowerment

in the social context of India, and the role of men in this process across rural and urban communities are other areas of research that could inform leadership development of women. Exploring the effects of engagement in voluntary activities on women's development into leadership roles in India is another required research. Studying developmental opportunities available to and accessed by current women leaders who emerged from rural backgrounds could provide an understanding of what experiences need to be created to nurture more women in rural India to take on leadership roles. Studying life experiences and critical decision points of successful Indian women leaders in different fields could also offer a glimpse of favorable situations and negative influences on women's leadership development.

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7

It Takes a Village: Collaborations and Partnerships Empowering Women in India for Leadership

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The late former President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, made a strong statement on the need for empowering women for a nation's development when he said,

empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation; when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation. (Vadavi, 2017, p. 1)

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This responsibility of empowering women cannot be government's alone. In the 12th Five-Year Plan, the Government of India recognized the need for intersectoral convergence to achieve the objectives for gender equity and women's empowerment. The planning commission report of the Working Group on Women's Agency and Empowerment stated, "The involvement of NGOs, community organizations and membership-based organizations of women, research centers and universities will be pivotal for achieving scale and impact for women's empowerment" (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2011, p. 79). Thus, there is candid awareness that objectives for women's empowerment can be met only through collaborative approaches with grassroots structures.

Nonprofit organizations, such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), government-organized NGOs, social action groups, non-party political groups, voluntary organizations, and welfare organizations, have been active on women's issues at the grassroots level for decades since India became independent in 1947. However, it was in the 1980s that the nonprofit sector matured, attracting young professionals committed to social change and engaging in research, consulting, and training services (Vasavada, 2007). The government started encouraging partnerships with the nonprofit sector, depending on them for service delivery, while nonprofits maintained ties with the government for funding (Kudva, 2005). Cross-sector partnerships and collaborations between the government and NGOs are becoming characteristic of governance today (Kumar, 2012; Vasavada, 2007).

International development organizations, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, have also recognized the need for collaborative approaches, working with government support and partnering with local nonprofits. In addition to civil society organizations, businesses are also important allies. At the Women's Empowerment Principles Annual Event held in March 2016, in New York, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed business leaders and emphasized, "When companies invest in women, they see a range of benefits and a return on investment. It is clear that gender equality is a business issue" (UN Women, 2016, para. 3).

In an effort to make businesses active partners in the social development of the nation, India became the first country to mandate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with the Companies Act 2013. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs indicated some broad areas and activities that consti-

tute CSR, one of them being to promote gender equality and women's empowerment (Abraham, 2013). The Act also requires at least one board member to be a woman. Thus, businesses are engaging with international organizations and local nonprofits to distribute economic, social, political, and environmental advantages beyond corporate borders to make a positive impact on the communities in which they operate.

In this chapter, we explore collaborations and partnerships working toward women's empowerment in India, recognizing that this paves the way for leadership in social, economic, political, and business spheres. Research for this chapter included a literature review of articles in peer-reviewed journals on women's leadership and empowerment in India with an emphasis on collaborations and partnerships for such initiatives. Databases used for this search included ABI/Inform Complete Plus, Business Search Complete, JSTOR, Social Science Citation Index, and Social Science Research Network. In addition, searches were conducted on Google and Google Scholar to uncover stories of women leaders and collaborative efforts and to retrieve and access reports published by government agencies, international organizations, and think tanks on the topic of women's empowerment. We also conducted four interviews with leaders of collaborations working to empower women in Indian society. We discuss the strengths and challenges of these collaborations and partnerships in developing women leaders and make recommendations for research and practice.

Political Leadership

Women are often excluded from decision-making in their households, as well as in the nation's policymaking. Women's equal participation in governance is recognition of their right to speak and to be heard. It is also a means of social transformation. Decisions made and policies implemented by governance institutions at national and local levels can help shape perceptions of the roles that women and men play in society, while also determining their access to rights and resources. Involving women in defining these policies and processes, and in influencing the institutions that produce them, will ensure that the government responds to the needs of both women and men and contribute to gender equality.

Women in Local Government

In 1992, the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India provided that one-third of the seats in all *Panchayat* (local-level government) councils, as well as one-third of the *Pradhan* (chairperson) positions, must be reserved for women. The percentage of women at various levels of political activity shifted dramatically as a result of this constitutional change, from 4–5% before the introduction of *Panchayat Raj* Institutions (PRI) to 25–40% after PRI (Jain, 1996). By 1994, 330,000 women and, by 2012, more than one million women had entered politics.

In 2009, UN Women, the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and empowerment of women, signed an agreement with the Royal Norwegian Embassy to initiate a three-year program entitled Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in South Asia. In India, this program was co-owned by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and UN Women in collaboration with the Royal Norwegian Embassy and aimed to empower elected women representatives in local governance to make public policy and resource allocation patterns responsive to women's human rights. It also sought to understand and address issues of women's participation in local governance from a grassroots perspective. As a part of this program, the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) conducted a study in 2012. The study was based on a survey of 3000 elected women and men in a *Gram Panchayat* (Village Council) members; and interviews with heads and members of a *Panchayat Samiti* (Intermediate Council) and a *Zilla Parishad* (District Council), and other stakeholders in three districts (Alwar in Rajasthan, Gajapati in Odisha, and Mysore in Karnataka). They found that women are moving into leadership positions through both reserved and unreserved seats and that many perceive positive outcomes as a result of being a *Gram Panchayat* member, including increased self-confidence and improved status in the family and community.

Another partnership was formed in 2010 by UN Women and The Hunger Project (THP), a global nonprofit organization committed to ending hunger and poverty by pioneering sustainable, grassroots, women-centered strategies. The objective of this partnership was to facilitate leadership development of elected women representatives and empower them

to exercise their leadership in public office and practice good governance in their constituencies (The Hunger Project & UN Women, 2011). The core strategies of this partnership included workshops, training of trainers of partner organizations, media dialogue, campaigns to strengthen women's understanding of the electoral process, communication of the importance of women in panchayats, and mobilization in *Gram Sabha* (Village Assembly) and *Ward Sabha* (Subdivision of Village Assembly). The partnership initiated the formation of *Jagruk Manch*s (Awareness Forums) and Gender and *Panchayat* Resource Centers, developed linkages with legislators, and facilitated interface meetings with local administrations. The partnership has helped in accelerating the process of empowering women to practice responsive governance based on principles of women's human rights, social justice, accountability, and transparency.

Women in National Government

India lags behind other countries in participation of women in parliament with women represented by only 12% in the *Lok Sabha* (Lower House) and by 11% in the *Rajya Sabha* (Upper House). A Women's Reservation (81st Constitutional Amendment) Bill was introduced in 1996 seeking to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the *Lok Sabha* and the state legislative assemblies. However, it failed to get approval in the lower house until 2008 and was tabled in the *Rajya Sabha*, where it passed in 2010. It still needs to secure the approval of the *Lok Sabha*. In spite of this setback, the need to increase participation of women in parliament has been widely acknowledged, and there is evidence of partnerships to build the capacity of women for parliament as detailed below.

The Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) and the Centre for Social Research collaborated to offer a certificate course on political leadership for women to strengthen the capabilities and leadership skills of aspiring women politicians to contest elections and participate in governance. Thirty political and social leaders across India enrolled in this course in 2012. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); UN Women; Government of Karnataka; business leaders, like Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw; and academic institutions, like the Jawaharlal Nehru

University and Takshashila Institute, extended their support in different ways. Spread over ten weeks, the course focused on policy analysis, political action, personal development, gender perspectives, and political ideologies through a mix of case studies, model parliament, exposure visits, field assignments in constituencies, and media interactions (IIMB, 2013).

Action Aid, a global movement of people whose vision is to defeat poverty and attain human rights for all, launched the Beti Zindabad campaign in 2012, in collaboration with women's organizations from 64 districts in 20 states, giving women's empowerment a more physical and active voice, especially in a way that can make a strong political statement (Bahl, 2014). In 2014, collaborating with 80 grassroots women's activists, the campaign organized a Women's Parliament to raise issues that women face, such as trafficking, child marriage, acid attacks, domestic violence, girl infanticide, sexual violence, skewed land distribution, *Dalit* (discriminated caste) women's access to land, equal property rights of women, women's political participation, social security, disability issues, declining child sex ratio, transgender issues, gender-based discrimination, health and sanitation issues, wage inequality, workplace harassment, and issues of minorities and tribal women. They also discussed ideas on plausible solutions and evaluated progress and enforcement of laws already enacted.

Economic Leadership

Financial independence can often be the first step for women to break free from marital and societal constraints and have a voice of their own. Recognizing that women are agents of economic and social growth, the Indian government has adopted various measures for empowering women (Palaniappan & Aniyar, 2010). A special working group, instituted to work on Women's Agency and Empowerment as part of the 12th Five-Year Plan, is tasked with working on several schemes for economic empowerment of women. The formation of special-help groups (SHGs), and the reliance on their advocacy and implementation is crucial for the success of these schemes. Similarly, engagement of nonprofits in mobilizing women and spreading awareness about the projects is seen as critical.

The vital role of local nonprofits and businesses and the need to collaborate with them in meeting their sustainable development goals are also acknowledged by international development organizations. For example, UNDP, in addition to its committed partnership with the Government of India, also partners with foundations, local NGOs, and businesses. An example of its multi-level partnership and a new model of public-private collaboration can be seen in its project, Disha, a three-year partnership with the India Development Foundation and Xyntéo, supported by IKEA Foundation to support employment and entrepreneurial skill development among women in India. Similarly, the World Bank, in addition to the country partnership, relies on local NGOs and civil society organizations. Tejaswini, a World Bank project for socioeconomic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women, draws on the strengths of community partners, such as *anganwadi* (healthcare) workers, SHGs, gram panchayats, schools, and religious leaders to achieve its objective of providing market-driven skills training and secondary education to adolescent girls and young women in selected districts in Jharkhand.

Microfinance has been considered an effective vehicle for women's empowerment since the 1980s (Leach & Sitaram, 2002). Development organizations, such as the UNDP and the World Bank, have supported micro-credit schemes to help women generate savings for income-generating projects, thereby giving them confidence, leading to a sense of empowerment (Leach & Sitaram, 2002; Subramanian, 2010). Microfinance institutions have partnered with social businesses, SHGs, and cooperatives to boost entrepreneurial activity among women and herald progress for women's rights (Bulsara, Chandwani, & Gandhi, 2014). Women's World Banking, with financial institution partners in India—Sewa Bank and Ujjivan—has helped women take the road to empowerment through entrepreneurship by generating biofuel from mustard husks in a rural, tribal area in Rajasthan; running a dry-cleaning business in the bustling, urban center of Bangalore; or selling kites made from recycled paper and candy wrappers in the artsy metropolis of Ahmedabad (Eisenman, 2014).

The goal of women's empowerment through economic leadership is also the driver for several collaborations between foundations, business schools, and international development organizations with support from

the government. 10,000 Women is a global initiative supported by the Goldman Sachs Foundation that provides women entrepreneurs around the world with practical business education, business advising, and networking. Their partner, the Indian School of Business, make these services possible through its Executive Education Program. The Mann Deshi Foundation partners with the Business School for Rural Women, the Chamber of Commerce for Rural Women, and the Mann Deshi Bank to make micro-credit opportunities available for entrepreneurship and offer even the poorest of the poor programs like 5 Days in B-School and Deshi MBA at the business school.

Economic leadership in rural areas is probably best achieved through initiatives in the agricultural sector. A remarkable example is provided in the work of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), which has been working diligently toward empowering women in rural India in partnership with state and national governments, NGOs, international scientific research organizations, and private companies, such as SAB Miller, Coca Cola, JSW Foundation, Asian Paints, Power Grid Corporation of India, and Rural Electrification Corporation of India. ICRISAT has made concerted efforts in identifying rural women who are particularly disadvantaged, advocating and encouraging women's participation on their projects and ensuring equal pay for women. In addition, they formed SHGs to empower women farmers financially by identifying new avenues for earnings. With these efforts, ICRISAT has not only empowered women by making them financially independent but made them active participants and leaders in transforming dry arid lands into arable land (ICRISAT, 2014).

Today, Vaddemani Malleeswari in Musalireddygaripalli, Andhra Pradesh, leads 12 SHGs, teaches the villagers organic farming and skills for income generation, and helps them address their financial problems. Kamla Bai in Nayakheda, Madhya Pradesh, is earning more because of the skills she has acquired in using an improved variety of seeds, nutrient management, and water management, and is also a leader in her community, teaching men and women how to keep records and helping with writing applications for anything needed by the village from the government. Manibai in Dhirasar, Rajasthan, has gone beyond driving change in farming techniques to play a pivotal role in popularizing health programs

and being a voice for women's rights and education. She is honored as a *netaji* (leader) in her community and is seen as a development activist. Sabita Nayak of Kharsawan, Jharkhand, having increased her income through her ability to cultivate crops in the off-season, was able to build a *pucca* (brick) house, send her children to school, and even buy them a computer. Villagers go to her for agriculture-related questions. Her skills and her financial freedom have helped her gain respect in her community. Inspiring stories of leadership such as these abound in small rural districts across the country (ICRISAT, 2014).

Business Leadership

India, with a population of over 1.2 billion, 48.5% of whom are women, has dismally low participation of women in the labor force (Catalyst, 2015a). Very few women reach the top echelons of the corporate world. In 2013, the Companies Act was revised and approved to make it mandatory for all listed companies and other large public limited firms to appoint at least one woman director to their boards. Since 2013, there has been an increase in the proportion of women directors in corporate boards from 4.9% to 13.7% in companies listed in the National Stock Exchange (KPMG, 2017). A 2016 Deloitte study found that only 3.2% of board chairs were women, highlighting the low percentage of women in top leadership (PTI, 2017). Francesco and Mahtani (2011) shed light on some of the challenges facing India in developing women leaders. Added to the fact that India has among the lowest number of women in junior positions, there is a drastic decrease in the numbers at the mid-level as women quit work, mostly citing family reasons, such as childcare or caring for the elderly. In the absence of a system that provides career growth opportunities for women, many Indian women are reconciled to conform to cultural expectations and settle for societal expectations of women's roles. Making changes requires a concerted effort by businesses and government, with support from research and academic institutions. This section discusses some collaborations and partnerships in which businesses are working together with partners in government, academia, and nonprofits on an agenda of developing the bench strength of women leaders in business.

The Forum for Women in Leadership (WiLL Forum) India was founded in 2007 to leverage the vast talent pool of women in business, provide a forum for open dialogue and mentoring, and harness their power to make a contribution to business and society. Poonam Barua spearheaded this collaboration with Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, and KPMG, convincing them that 500 million women sitting at home was not good for the economy (P. Barua, personal communication, October 8, 2016). With Infosys as host, KPMG as the knowledge partner, and TCS providing their campus, the forum leveraged the brands of these companies, respected and admired in India, to earn goodwill, commitment, distinction, and stature in the business community. Around 6000 women have benefitted from various seminars and workshops, and more than 670 women from across sectors have been mentored by programs offered by the WiLL Forum. In addition, the Forum has released more than 15 research reports, provided WiLL certification to more than 50 companies for their women-friendly ecosystems, and certified more than 300 women, in partnership with the International Finance Corporation, for positions on boards (Barua, 2015).

Reach Out, another leadership development program for women, is a collaboration by five multinational companies: American Express, PepsiCo, Microsoft, PwC, and the Tata Group. Designed as an eight-month mentoring program for women executives from these multinationals, one to three levels removed from the C-suite, the program elements include leadership dialogues, group workshops, peer learning circles, an online learning community, and a culminating learning summit. Reach Out graduated 26 women in 2014 and 28 in 2015 (ET Bureau, 2014). With the launch of Reach Out 2.0, a second edition of the leadership program, 28 more women graduated in 2016 (Tata, 2016).

Tanmatra, a leadership program for women, was launched by a partnership of three complementary non-competing partners: IIMB as the education partner, Catalyst as the diversity research and consultant partner, and IBM as the corporate partner championing diversity. The program, designed for women leaders with 12–15 years of experience, is aimed at preparing a pipeline of women leaders for the next five to seven years (Catalyst, 2015b).

In addition to the programs discussed so far, primarily aimed at preparing women leaders for the C-suite, there are several that aim at developing women leaders for business at entry and mid-levels. The Genpact Center for Women's Leadership (GCWL) is the result of an industry-academia partnership between Genpact Limited and Ashoka University with a broad agenda to champion women's leadership and gender equity across regions, organizations, and generations in India through research and by creating ecosystems that advocate breakthrough policies and practices (ET Bureau, 2015). Meena Wilson, Executive Director of GCWL, highlighted their multipronged approach for developing business leaders. They reach out to corporations with career resilience programs and mentoring for returning mothers; to university students with leadership labs, scholarships, and international exchange programs; and to society at large through peer mentoring for young women from different social sectors and a corporate campaign to create gender equitable career paths to benefit Indian society (M. Wilson, personal communication, May 24, 2016).

Social Leadership

In the words of the gentle, revolutionary founder of Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and pioneer in women's empowerment and grassroots development in India, Ela Bhatt: "It is the women who are the leaders in change" (Sewa Bharat, 2014, p. 91). As women become authors of their own stories through economic and political empowerment, they have the potential to become powerful agents of change in their communities.

This is illustrated in the stories of Bhavana Damor, a three-time *sarpanch* (elected head of a village council) of Rampur Mewada *Gram Panchayat*, and Phoondi Bai Meda, a tribal woman who started out as a *panch* (member of a village council) in Sarangi *Gram Panchayat* (Kumar, 2016). Bhavana Damor made education a priority, built roads so children could attend school, and took steps to stop child labor by taking agents to task and ensuring integration of the children into the mainstream by enrolling them in the local school. Phoondi Bai Meda had to defy her father-in-law to enter politics but gained the villagers' support and went on to solve her village's problems of drinking water and disbursement of pensions to widows.

Recognizing the role of women in social change, UN Women, in partnership with the government, launched a knowledge center in 2012 for elected women representatives in rural areas with the goal of empowering and educating them to become efficient leaders. Nai Roshni, a leadership development program for minority women (minorities are defined as Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis, and Jains) by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, run with the help of NGOs, is a great example of a collaborative effort to instill confidence among minority women and empower them to move out of the confines of their home and community and assume leadership roles. The Mahila Samakhya Programme, qualified by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) as the world's largest government initiative to empower women, was launched in 1988 as a government-organized NGO and continues to work in partnership with women's groups and NGOs to empower marginalized women by building conscious and independent *sanghas* (collectives) to initiate and sustain social change (Shah, 2015; Subramaniam, 2003).

International development agencies seek out local partners; for example, ActionAid works in partnership with Ashana Trust in Mumbai, Thozhamai in Chennai, and Shaheen Women's Resource Centre and Welfare Association in Hyderabad in the Young Urban Women (YUW) program. Using the three programmatic strategies of ActionAid—empowerment, solidarity, and campaigning—YUW aims for the personal and economic independence of young women and supports them to have their voices heard and recognized in national and international forums (Chatterjee, 2015).

Indian businesses have had a long history of being active participants in social change. The pioneers of industrialization in India—Tata, Birla, Godrej, and Bajaj—set up charitable foundations, educational and healthcare institutions, and trusts for community development, even in the pre-Independence era. More recently, businesses have started engaging in CSR as a sustainable business strategy. With the Companies Act 2013 and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) mandates, companies meeting certain thresholds are required to develop a CSR policy, spend a minimum amount on CSR activities, and report on these activities. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has indicated some of their broad areas and activities, and promoting gender equality and women empowerment are among them (Abraham, 2013). This has resulted in the burgeoning of foundations set up by businesses to handle CSR and

the expansion of NGOs as they position themselves as influencers and enablers of the foundations (ter Weeme, 2015).

The Jana Urban Foundation (JUF) is the advisor and manager for the CSR activities of Janalakshmi Financial Services. With a vision of making Jana Foundation the springboard for large-scale transformation in the country, they focus on women's empowerment and child development. JUF offers awareness sessions on health and hygiene and provide livelihood skills training to over 3 million customers by partnering with institutions like the Biocon Foundation, pharmaceutical companies, nurses, and social workers. They also do advocacy work and research to inform policy. K.S. Ramdas, Managing Director and CEO of JUF, emphasized the need to make community members active members in development. Through Jana *Udyog Melas* (career fairs), they recruit Jana *Nayaks* (leaders) from the community, often children of their micro-credit customers. They encourage customers to step into leadership roles as Jana Champions and become partners in striving for social change (K. S. Ramdas, personal communication, June 16, 2016).

As another example, Diageo partnered with the British Council to launch a Young Women Social Entrepreneurship Development Programme in India to support women working in social enterprises and train them to become Master Trainers. Dr. Guru Gujral of the British Council highlighted the significance of the program. He said that supporting a new generation of young women social entrepreneurs is an investment as they, in turn, will inspire other women. This will lead to sustainable and inclusive growth (The Guardian, n.d.). According to Abanti Sankaranarayanan, Managing Director of Diageo India, this program aims to empower women of all socioeconomic profiles through training and skills development.

Strengths and Challenges of Collaborations for Developing Women Leaders

So far, we have discussed the interdependencies between government, international development organizations, businesses, local nonprofits, and SHGs and the sharing of knowledge and resources for a common objective. In many of these partnerships, a bottom-up approach to

addressing issues of gender equity and women's empowerment is evident. In these collaborations and partnerships, we see a "transformative process where citizenship is lived and becomes a collectively asserted social practice" (Tesoriero, 2006, p. 331). The collective strength of women, engendered through formal and informal women's groups, has been critical for engaging new waves of women, for advocating and taking action for change, and for generating leadership and voice among women. The influence of informal women's groups and collectives on the emergence of women's leadership has been corroborated in a study of women by Bisht and Sudarshan (2005). Networks that are developed and strengthened through collaborations also contribute to the growth and development of women leaders. However, collaborations are not without their limitations and challenges.

Collaboration or Conflict?

The support that the government has extended to NGOs can be a double-edged sword. Nagar and Raju (2003) cautioned that this dependence can take away from the independent nature of NGOs and make them more like an arm of the government. Government support can become perceived as "governmentalization of grassroots empowerment" (Sharma, 2006, p. 21). As local governments get involved in activities, such as micro-credit, NGOs are also uncertain about the role of government; are they collaborators or competitors (Thomas et al., 2010)? With government increasing its involvement at the grassroots level, there is apprehension that government has become the biggest NGO (Nagar & Raju, 2003; Sharma, 2006). Thus, NGO relations with the government can be viewed with uneasiness (Kudva, 2005).

Gender and Perceptions at Play

NGOs and nonprofits are predominantly led by women, while government is still dominated by men. Vasavada (2007) reported that this gender dynamic makes it difficult because of the attitudes of men officers toward women. Another perception that makes collaborative efforts difficult is one held by government officers about nonprofit organizations

that they are corrupt organizations making profits under the name of a social cause (Vasavada, 2007). Further, negative attitudes toward women leaders constrain their ability to fulfill their roles and seek leadership positions (ICRW & UN Women, 2012). The following quotes by women leaders in Gajjar's (2016) study provide evidence of such negative attitudes of the village community and family members: "the men from our village started commenting that what work can women do? It is only the men who can work" (p. 100); "My parents-in-law would scold me: Where are you going? Why are you wasting your time? Why are you delaying the household work?" (p. 100). Even with reserved seats in the *Panchayat* for women, power often resides with husbands, sons, or brothers: common expressions are *pati panch* (council member's husband) and *pati Pradhan* (council chairperson's husband), implying that the *pati* (husband) is in reality the one with influence (Bisht & Sudarshan, 2005), and, in many places, elected women representatives are a token presence.

In the business world, although women are encouraged to participate in training and mentoring programs, not enough is being done to take the next step and promote women to leadership positions. Poonam Barua, founder and chairperson of WiLL Forum, laments that often companies act as if they are doing a favor to women rather than taking a genuine interest in advancing them. The mandate to have at least one woman on the board is grudgingly being fulfilled only to follow the law. Some companies appoint a woman family member to fulfill this mandate (P. Barua, personal communication, October 8, 2016).

Equitable Opportunities and Access to Resources

Citizen partnerships in rural governance have been a model of success in India through the *Panchayat* system, as seen in previous sections of this chapter. However, this model of citizen partnership has not been introduced yet in urban governance, posing challenges for the integration of marginalized women into mainstream urban life (Chatterjee, 2015). Often, resources are unaffordable to most women as in the case of the certificate course for political leadership offered by IIMB (Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore), which had a price tag of INR 4.75 lakh, which is around US \$7410.

Social Acceptance of Empowering Structures

The success of the provision of reservation for women in the *Panchayat Raj* institutions is a testament to the fact that structure can provide space for women to engage and contribute (Bisht & Sudarshan, 2005). The need for a similar provision in the parliament and state legislatures is quite apparent. Yet, empowering structures may not have intended consequences unless there is more widespread social acceptance. Many of the women elected as *Sarpanchs* are just rubber stamps, with the men in their house discharging all the official duties (Malhotra, 2014).

The structure provided by the Companies Act 2013 has also been limited. Businesses are often reluctant partners in CSR, a requirement that they perceive as undesirably thrust upon them. In many cases, they are passive partners and NGOs with whom they collaborate feel most of the pressure of delivering, while their concern is mostly to embellish annual reports (Dave, 2013). NGOs look to their corporate partners for funding but often wonder if the time taken for paperwork is worth it. The balance between structure and agency needed by grassroots organizers at the forefront of social change is a delicate one.

Recommendations for Future Research

In our review of the academic literature, we noted that research has focused mostly on the outcomes of collaborations; not enough attention has been given to the process and nature of collaborations. Thus, the advantages and challenges of these collaborations remain widely unexplored, with hardly any discussion or reflection on the processes. Qualitative studies that explore the transformative processes within collaborations would help fill this gap and provide insights for the success of future collaborations. The experiences of the individual players within collaborations also need to be studied. There is much that can be learned from the perceptions they have, the decisions they make, the conflicts they overcome, and the impact they make. We also see the need for future research on the impact that collaborations have at various levels: on the growth and development of individuals involved in collaborations, spe-

cifically women; on the evolution of the collaborations themselves; and on the communities they are intended to serve. Collaborations take time to become truly effective and sustainable. Longitudinal studies that examine the processes and nature of challenges at each stage would contribute to the literature. Organizational change theories could be used to examine the various stages of change.

What we saw as abundant in the literature were reports by international organizations, such as UN Women and ICRISAT. These reports are useful in evaluating whether a specific objective has been met. However, in these cases, as the reports are intended for defined stakeholders, larger questions that are relevant, but not directly related to the stated objective, may go unexamined and unanswered. This highlights the value of independent studies. Comparative studies can also be very useful, as they could help identify universal and situational factors that contribute to the success of collaborations.

Future research is also necessary from a gender perspective. What biases come into play when having to negotiate collaborations and work toward common goals? How do women leaders navigate these situations? What do women define as success in these endeavors, and are there differences in the way they are perceived, as compared to their men counterparts?

The Future of Collaborations

Collaborations abound. For these collaborations to be truly effective, however, the independence and unique strengths of each entity should be respected so collaborative efforts can yield better results and each can learn to leverage the strengths of their partners. Biases and unmatched expectations can strain relationships and get in the way of smooth collaborations. Academic institutions and human resource development (HRD) professionals can have a powerful role to play in facilitating team-building and trust-building exercises to examine biases, reveal perceptions, and guide participants to analyze their actions and practice openness. Further, academic institutions can take leadership in facilitating collaboration among multiple entities for optimal outcomes. For example, if they know that an NGO or a start-up business has a need and

is looking for a partner, they can provide their expertise to make recommendations, facilitate an introduction, and even continue to provide consultative services for smooth functioning of the collaboration. The role of academic institutions in providing support through research and facilitating forums for building women's leadership cannot be overstated.

The government could also take additional measures to provide structural support for developing women and the smooth functioning of collaborations. To strengthen women's participation in government, they could organize women's parliaments to develop women leaders for urban governance. Further, they could fund/subsidize training programs aimed at developing women leaders for urban governance. They can provide forums for creating and supporting national and transnational networks to enhance the capabilities of individual women leaders through the sharing of expertise and resources. Keeping in mind the challenges that exist due to gender biases and perceptions that get in the way of effective functioning, they could fund and support programs that build awareness and provide training to deal with these issues.

International organizations are also well positioned to make collaborations work. They can work with donor agencies to provide funding for training and support to ensure that processes of collaboration and conflict resolution are built into implementation. They can also ensure that enhancing the capacity of women leaders is an overarching goal for every collaboration they support.

Finally, with perceptions about women changing, and women gaining confidence to take leadership roles to transform their communities, collaborations of the future that can make lasting changes for empowering women in Indian society will be the ones powered by women. Women's organizations and movements could work together to foster solidarity and collective purpose, strengthen social capital, and create safe environments to help ordinary women confront adverse and disabling norms and conditions and make extraordinary contributions to society. These women leaders, who earn respect from their communities, can be the driving force in bringing new energy to the ancient saying: *Yatra Naryastu Pujyante Ramante Tatra Devata* (Where women are respected, there divinity flourishes).

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Part III

Sector Perspectives

This part gives an in-depth overview of the current state of women leaders in different sectors (e.g., corporate, entrepreneurship, government, education, non-government organizations, and agriculture) in India.



8

Women Leaders in Corporate India

Meera Alagaraja, Denise M. Cumberland,
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The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of India, passed a regulation, Companies Act of 2013, mandating listed companies to hire women employees for their boards and executive positions (SEBI, 2015). A recent report (Institutional Investor Advisory Services, 2017) claimed that this push by the SEC has led to an increased number of women in leadership positions. Similar to the Fortune 500 companies reports published in the USA by Forbes magazine, the Economic Times in India captures information of top 500 companies in India through the Nifty 500 companies report. This report has stated that the number of women in leadership roles has gone up from 5% in 2012 to 13% as

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of March 2017. However, only 3% of the boards have a woman leader as the chairperson, and only 7% are serving as executive directors. While there has been some progress in the number of women leaders in corporate India, the pace at which this change is happening is really slow. The Global Gender Gap report of 2016 ranks India at 136th in the economic participation and opportunity category, 113th in educational attainment, and 142nd in health and survival.

These numbers and the noticeable lack of women's representation in executive positions point to many barriers to the advancement of women with serious implications for sustaining long-term performance and change in organizations (Ghosh, 2016; Wang & McLean, 2016). Gupta and Saran (2013) suggested that, while economic reforms have liberalized and grown the Indian economy, Indian women have not benefitted as much as men with new employment opportunities in the workplace. Furthermore, Indian women in the workforce continue to grapple with the challenges of balancing family and career-related responsibilities (Munn & Chaudhuri, 2016); struggle to overcome cultural stereotypes about women's roles (Sims & Hirudayaraj, 2016); and deal with systematic bias that hinders career advancement (Batra & Reio, 2016; Chawla & Sharma, 2016; Gupta & Saran, 2013; Naqvi, 2011; Wang & McLean, 2016). As research has shown that women in India are loyal employees (Radhakrishnan, 2009), organizational investment in policies or programs that would help encourage and thereby increase the number of women employees advancing to leadership positions would make good business sense.

Gender issues in India are typically approached from historical, sociological, and cultural perspectives, but they are rarely studied with a human resource development (HRD) lens. The 2016 *Advances for Developing Human Resources* issue on HRD gender and diversity issues in India with the contributions of several HRD scholars (Batra & Reio, 2016; Collins & Abichandani, 2016; Ghosh, 2016; Haynes & Alagaraja, 2016; Munn & Chaudhuri, 2016; Sims & Hirudayaraj, 2016; Wang & McLean, 2016) highlights the noticeable gap in gender and diversity issues in India in both research and practice. Further, these scholars offered ways to address the gap using a comparative lens with the USA. Such cross-country comparisons offered value for evaluating and assessing the impact of government, corporate, and non-profit institutions in addressing gaps in the participation of women and other underrepresented minorities in the

workplace. However, research that focuses on women in corporate India is needed, and this chapter addresses this gap.

This chapter identifies challenges and issues that hinder participation and representation of women in leadership positions in the corporate workforce and highlights practices that can assist HRD and organizational leaders in nurturing women leaders in the corporate sector. By examining literature, we highlight key issues, challenges, and evidence of practices that can support and enhance the participation of women in leadership positions in the corporate world.

In spite of many favorable corporate initiatives to help women workers move up the corporate ladder, the pipeline for women executives is small and shrinking. This is evident from the fact that while 24% of managers in corporations are women, this number comes down to 20% for director-level positions, which further declines to 19% for senior managers, and, finally, to 13% for executive positions (Shyamsunder, Pollack, & Travis, 2015). This leaking pipeline makes it difficult for organizations to find the talent pool necessary to fill executive positions with women. There are many factors that contribute to the leaking pipeline. To make a difference in the numbers of women represented in leadership positions, it is critical to discuss and understand the factors contributing to the leakage of the talent pipeline. Hence, we identified how media and society have discussed the role of women and women leaders in corporate India. We accomplished this by reviewing tweets (from Twitter) discussing the role of women in corporate India over almost a two-year period (January 2015 to September 2016) and identifying themes that capture the focus and efforts of organizational and HRD leaders, as well as society in general. We surveyed Twitter messages from January 2015 to September 2016 as a way to highlight public conversations about the role of women's leadership in corporate India. We used "women leadership in corporate India" as a search query in the Twitter search box. This helped us identify temporally relevant messages revealing social discussions on the role of women in corporate India, which is the central focus of this chapter. We linked key themes from the literature review and the content analysis of Twitter messages. We also identified women chief executive officers (CEOs) from practitioner literature to offer evidence of their impact on organizations and society.

In the following sections, we note methods utilized for reviewing the limited literature on the role of women in corporate India and present a review of literature on the topic, integrating key findings with the thematic analysis of content from social media. Then, we identify key women leaders in corporate India and offer recommendations for research and practice. By doing so, we complement existing efforts in research and generate interest in furthering the role of women leaders in corporate India from an HRD perspective.

Literature Review

We initiated our literature review using combinations of several search terms, including women leadership, work-life balance for women in corporate India, and effects of workplace safety issues on Indian women's career. We limited our search to academic journals published in the last ten years (between 2005 and 2016). The search for "women leadership in corporate India" in the TAMU (Texas A&M University) libraries came up with only seven results—five peer-reviewed publications and two book reviews. Similarly, the search for "work life balance (e.g., family expectations, maternity) for women in corporate India" resulted in three peer-reviewed publications after excluding the overlapping results. For "safety at the workplace for women in India", there were eight search results. Of the eight, however, only two were relevant to the current topic.

Our literature review focused on the barriers that have prevented the advancement of women in corporate India, issues of work-life imbalance, and safety of women in the workplace. These themes were reflected on discussions in Twitter, where social discussions focused on challenges, biases, and barriers that prevent or stymie corporate career paths and progression of women. Further, both research and public conversations identified additional barriers, such as workplace harassment and the lack of family-friendly work policies that have impacted participation of women in the workplace. Work-life imbalance refers to the unfair societal expectations placed on women at work with limited support for how they manage conflicting demands of their families and work lives. Family-

friendly work policies offer some ways for companies to support employees of both genders to avail benefits in the workplace. However, work-life balance related issues tend to stress women in different ways that need to be addressed (Batra & Reio, 2016).

In addition, our search on Twitter yielded discussions focused on increasing gender diversity on corporate boards and in entry-level positions in organizations. We integrated the key themes from literature and social media in the following sections.

Barriers to Advancement

Women's participation in India's workforce is low in both rural (36%) and urban areas (21%) as compared to 81% and 76% participation rates of their male counterparts (MGI, 2015). Furthermore, the scant number of women workers in the workforce is likely to confront inequality at the workplace, evidenced by a wage gap, lower representation in leadership positions, and unfair work-life expectations, especially in the corporate sector.

Culturally, homemaking is considered to be the primary responsibility of married women in India (Wesley, Muthuswamy, & Darling, 2009). This is also evident from some of the tweets identified in the Twitter feed about how pregnancy is still a barrier for advancement of well-performing women. VOFN India @vofnindia tweeted the following on December 9, 2015

Is Corporate India Still Insensitive Towards Pregnancy?

Along with VOFN India, many others tweeted their support addressing the bias against pregnant women in the corporate world. According to Rajadhyakasha and Smitha, "most of the dual earner wives continue to view themselves primarily as homemakers, and their work status did little to alter their sex role orientation" (p. 1677). This results in the assumption and expectation that women should always choose their family over job responsibilities in case of a conflict. This creates an unconscious bias toward women's career thus contributing to the hindrance or slowing down their advancement. Women returning to the workforce after maternity leave

deal with increased challenges of getting back on their career track (Collins & Abhichandani, 2016). Twitter posts like the one by Maternity Madam tweeted on November 5, 2015, further discuss the issues women face while re-entering the workforce after a maternity break.

Women in corporate India complain of another bump: get(ting) back on track after maternity leave.

In spite of a rising number of women in the corporate world, the percentage of women in leadership roles remains low. Globally, only 10% of the managers in Fortune 500 companies are women, and this number comes down to 4% when looking at positions like CEO, chief operating officer (COO), and executive board president. Even in the uppermost ranks of the corporate hierarchy, only 3% earn as much as men counterparts (Chauhan, 2010). This global issue is exacerbated when there are dominant cultural and societal expectations about woman's role as is the case in India (Collins & Abhichandani, 2016). The preconceived notions and assumptions about an Indian woman's abilities, priorities, and prime responsibilities become key contributors to the glass ceiling that hinders their career growth (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Child rearing responsibilities for women is another major contributor in delaying the rapid growth in careers of working women (Broadbridge, 2009). While Indian corporations are working toward creating fairer work environments for pregnant women and working mothers, these organizations have not been able to address the issue completely, particularly at leadership levels (Kannan, 2009; Naithani, 2010). Maternity leave policies in the private sector are not favorable and more often than not do not adhere to legal provisions. Chauhan (2010) found that 80% of working women agreed that parenthood adds considerable stress and is a more major roadblock for women than for men counterparts.

Women in managerial positions in the corporate sector experience high levels of role dissonance. As the leader of an organization, she is expected to be assertive and lead. But, as a mother, wife, and a family member, she is expected to adhere to traditional values, defer to her spouse or in-laws, and be nurturing (McNay, 2009; Uppalury & Racherla, 2014). The dissonance in the different roles played by a woman leads her to question her identity and the role expectations. Challenging the

unquestioned roles and boundaries comes at a social cost posing risk to social and familial life, thus forcing women to pick sides and compromise (Uppalury & Racherla, 2014). Hence, it is not uncommon for women to sacrifice their ambition and career advancement to fulfill their roles as a wife, mother, and daughter.

In November of 2015, SEGUE Sessions (India's first large format skill building and networking program for women seeking transition in their careers) conducted a graduation ceremony for their Women on Corporate Boards Mentorship Program. In response to this, many responded commending and advocating the need for support programs like these.

Supporting women is neither corporate social responsibility (CSR) nor philanthropy but a moral responsibility.—Nita Ambani, India

In a recent study published by McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), it is noted that increasing the participation of women in corporate India would boost the Indian economy by potentially increasing annual gross domestic product (GDP) to \$28 trillion by 2025, which is 26% more than the predicted value (MGI, 2015). The study further argued that to increase gender equality in the work place, it is critical to break the misconceptions about a woman's career and to achieve gender equality in society, thus implying that the former is not possible without the latter (Batra & Reio, 2016). Given social attitudes in India about the rigid gender roles embedded in strongly patriarchal narratives in the community, working women tend to over-exhaust themselves trying to balance both social and professional responsibilities. Hence, a change in social attitude about women's careers and their responsibilities is critical and should be the starting point to work toward overcoming the barriers they face in workplaces. Lack of proper support from the leadership in corporations, absence of gender-sensitive policies, and demands of managing a family force many women to settle for less-demanding jobs in corporations (Buddhapriya, 2009; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). This is often interpreted as women not being committed to their careers, thus inducing more stress for them successfully to manage their careers and homes without much institutional help (Uppalury & Racherla, 2014). In what follows, we identify general workforce-related challenges that hinder the advancement of women in leadership in corporate workplace.

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance was first introduced in the UK in the late 1970s (Jawahar, 2010). The phrase is used to describe the balance between the time an individual spends on work-related activities and non-work-related activities. This concept has become increasingly important in conversations related to women in the corporate world due to the increasing numbers of women in the workforce (Jawahar, 2010). While necessity has been the most important driving force for women in India to take up professional careers, other factors, such as changing socio-cultural values, better education, and globalization, have also contributed to this push (Sharma, 2015).

The outsourcing industry has created many jobs in India. Call center jobs and jobs in the information technology (IT) sector are the major industries for outsourced jobs. Both of these industries demand long and odd working hours, thus making it difficult for women with families to balance responsibilities at home and at work (Sundari & Sathyanarayana, 2012). While this is in part due to work expectations and long hours, societal expectations and cultural norms are to be equally blamed for contributing to the stress of women in corporate India.

The stress of juggling home and work responsibilities is a real challenge that forces most Indian women to choose between career and home (Munn & Chaudhuri, 2016; Valk & Srinivasan, 2011). In order to be successful at moving up the ladder in corporate India, women need to balance responsibilities at home, societal demands around behavioral norms, and work expectations. Lakshmi @Phandom_Delight tweeted on Jun 15, 2016

What do some women have to do to race in Corporate India? Take calls at 11pm & agree to share a drink?

Women who choose career over family are accused of being career-oriented, selfish, and too independent women choosing to be home-makers are accused of not working hard enough or not having enough aspiration. It is unfortunate that many academics and researchers side with this kind of thinking, which is evident from statements like “It also

happens that many women lose focus on career continuity because of ‘aspiration deficit’ as they have a choice of leaving the career in India (unlike men who have to work whether they like their work or not)” (Sundari & Sathyanarayana, 2012, p. 75). Work expectations and guilt over missing family responsibilities force women into questioning their self and professional identities (Uppalury & Racherla, 2014).

Tang and Cousins (2005) argued that values and culture of a society define how work and life intertwine. As organizations exist within the confines of a society, the wider conceptions and traditions influence the attitudes and policies within a workplace. Within the confines of a collectivist society, most women place family over career. Furthermore, in collectivist cultures, men also expect women to handle the daily chores along with their careers, thus making it even more difficult for women in managerial positions in corporate organizations to balance their work and life (Uppalury & Racherla, 2014).

Safety and Health Concerns at Work

According to Oxfam India and Social and Rural Research Institute (Biswas, 2012), 93% of working women reported that they were involved or knew someone who has been sexually harassed in the workplace. However, only 17% reported taking formal action against the perpetrator. In spite of legislations protecting women against workplace violence, most often incidents like these go unreported due to the fear or societal and professional repercussions. The study further reported that women who are the sole earners in the family are more susceptible to these incidents given their financial dependency on the job. In response to a particular harassment case that was exposed in early 2016, Twitter poured its support and expressed its support against harassment of women in corporate India. A tweet by Performative Woke Bro @AList Rap is as shown below

This boils down to corporate India's male sense of entitlement. We treat women in the workplace as objects 'coz we can get away with it.

The business process outsourcing (BPO) and the call center industry have had an exponential growth in India in the past decade. However, jobs in this sector come with many challenges, including late-night shifts and lack of proper safety measures for employees working these shifts. Many measures taken by BPOs to improve security and tighten safety policies, such as company-sponsored drop-off and pick-up vehicles, have decreased the number of attacks and incidents against women employees but have not been able to prevent them completely. The other major safety concern for women working multiple shifts is their health. It becomes extremely difficult for women to manage shifts at odd times and handle the responsibilities at home as well (Indradevi & Kamalapriya, 2006). Sharma (2015) focused on health and wellbeing of women working in call centers and identified physical and psychological concerns that hindered their performance in the workplace. This creates an urgent need for corporate leaders in India to advocate for more inclusive HRD policies to improve overall performance outcomes for the organization. HRD practices and policies can go a long way in addressing existing barriers in the workplace for aspiring women leaders.

Profiles of Current Women Leaders in Corporate India

Although gender inequity and women under-representation in the Indian corporate sector are widely acknowledged and discussed, some notable exceptions are at the forefront of corporate leadership. The leaders that follow are supporting other women leaders in navigating the corporate terrain. These leaders were identified from the popular business literature in India.

Ambiga Dhiraj

Ambiga Dhiraj, chief executive of Mu Sigma (2017), has been a key influencer in the company since its inception in 2004. On February 3, 2016, she was appointed the CEO. She however stepped down on

October 5, 2016. Under her auspices Mu Sigma grew from a fledgling company to a key player in the corporate sector (About us Board of Directors, 2016).

Anu Aga

Anu Aga served as a board member of Thermax Limited (2017), the \$800 million Indian energy and environment management company since 1996. She is credited with facilitating four major turnaround initiatives: reconstitution of the board, shedding of non-core activities, right-sizing of operations, and increased focus on the customer. At senior levels, she fostered a high-performance culture (Anu Aga, Director, Thermax Limited, 2016). She cofounded Teach for India in 2008, a non-profit engaged in hiring young people for teaching in schools for poor kids.

Arundhati Bhattacharya

Arundhati Bhattacharya, the first woman chairperson of the State Bank of India (SBI), was listed as the 30th most powerful woman in the world in 2015, according to *Forbes* magazine (Arundhati Bhattacharya, 2016). She is associated with SBI since 1977 and is *Foreign Policy's* Top 100 Global Thinkers and identified as one of the most powerful women in Asia Pacific by *Fortune* magazine (Arundhati Bhattacharya, 2016). Her noteworthy achievements include the expansion of SBI into general insurance, custodial services, and the Macquarie Infrastructure Fund. She has also introduced a two-year sabbatical policy for women employees for child or elder care (Arundhati Bhattacharya, 2016). Mr. Rajnish Kumar succeeded her as the SBI chairperson on October 8, 2017.

Chanda Kochhar

Chanda Kochhar (2017) has served as a board member of ICICI (Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India) for the past 16 years. Recently, she was appointed the managing director and CEO. Her efforts

in modeling the retail-banking sector in India and her leadership of the ICICI Group have led to many changes in the financial sector. She was conferred with the Padma Bhushan, one of India's highest civilian honors, in 2011 (Chanda Kochhar, 2016).

Dipali Goenka

As the managing director of Welspun Global Brands Limited and executive director of Welspun India Ltd., Dipali Goenka (2017) has successfully led the development of two of the most recognized brands in India, known as SPACES Home & Beyond and WelHome (Seek Innovative Solutions, 2013). Dipali's astute leadership propelled Welspun India Ltd. to be the biggest exporter of home fashion products and a global leader in the terry towel business (Forbes in Asia, 2016).

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw

Biocon, Asia's leading bio-pharmaceuticals enterprise, is spearheaded by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (2017), a pioneering biotech entrepreneur, the chairperson and managing director since 1978. She is at the forefront of the biotechnology industry and has received numerous awards for her achievements. *Time* magazine listed her as among the 100 most influential people in the world. She is also the recipient of India's two highest civilian honors, namely, the Padma Shri (1989) and the Padma Bhushan (2005) (Kiran, 2016).

Shikha Sharma

Since 2009, Shikha Sharma has been Axis Bank's managing director and CEO (2017). Her transformational leadership enhanced the bank's strengths in multiple areas ranging from corporate to retail and banking products. Her accomplishments are widely recognized. Among her many notable awards are: Banker of the Year for 2014–2015 by Business Standard, AIMA—JRD (All India Management Association Jehangir

Ratanji Dadabhoy) Tata Corporate Leadership Award for the Year 2014, India's Most Valuable CEOs by *Businessworld* 2013, India's Best Woman CEO by *Business Today* 2013, and many more (Shikha Sharma, Managing Director—Axis Bank, 2016). Harvard Business School has also published a case study on managing change at Axis Bank in 2013, recognizing her organizational change efforts (Shikha Sharma, Managing Director—Axis Bank, 2016).

Usha Ananthasubramanian

Usha Ananthasubramanian was the managing director and CEO of PNB (Punjab National Bank) between August 2015 and 2017. Since May 2017, she is the managing director, CEO, and director of Allahabad Bank (Punjab National Bank (PNB:Natl India), 2017). She is also instrumental in setting up the first women-focused Bank BMB (Bhartiya Mahila Bank) (Usha Ananthasubramanian Joins as MD & CEO of PNB, 2015).

Vandana Luthra

VLCC Health Care Limited, a major name in India's wellness field, was founded and is owned by Vandana Luthra (Founder and mentor of VLCC Group, 2016, January 4). Since 1989 VLCC has served over 10 million customers. Vandana Luthra was awarded the Padma Shri (2013) for contributing to trade and industry. Fortune India listed her as the 33rd most powerful woman in business in India in 2015. Vandana (2016) is also appointed as Chairperson of the Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council by the Indian government.

Vinita Gupta

Vinita Gupta, chief executive of Lupin, heads India's third-largest pharmaceutical company, with \$2 billion in revenue since 2013. Lupin is the only Asian company in the top ten largest rapidly growing companies (by prescriptions) in the USA, according to IMS Health, which tracks drug

sales globally (Jayakumar, 2015). Vinita has been the Chairman and CEO of Lupin Pharmaceuticals Inc., the US wholly owned subsidiary of Lupin since 2003. She also has been its managing director since October 11, 2003 (Lupin Ltd., 2017). She was awarded Entrepreneur of the Year award by Forbes India and was named 2015 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

These professional achievers have increased the representation of women in upper management and on corporate boards. The representation of women on corporate boards was a trending topic on Twitter. However, we found limited research on the impact of women in upper echelons on organizational performance. We have identified this trend as an important topic for future research. While we do not have personalized stories of how the above women leaders overcame barriers, we situated their success within the context of societal and cultural barriers to highlight the importance of celebrating the successes of these women. Women are expected to perform their roles and responsibilities at home even when they climb the corporate ladder. This is reflected in practitioner literature where many women leaders have emphasized that, despite being at the helm of affairs in leading multinationals, they are still perceived as homemakers first at home. The stereotypes attached to women's roles often act as a barrier impeding women's progress in leadership roles. Women often have to fit into society's mold. For example, although this may not be true always, parents and well-wishers are keen to get them married as soon as they reach marriageable age. As a result, women may end up sacrificing their career aspirations to fulfill parents' wishes. If they are fortunate, they may find a husband who is supportive of their career interests and propel them forward. However, in most cases, women leaders have experienced this major barrier. We noted that these barriers identified from the personal experiences of women leaders reinforce the themes presented in our review of the literature.

Some women leaders from our selected profiles highlighted that, while selecting/appointing corporate leaders, the selectors may be looking for certain qualities that sadly may be stereotypical masculine traits, for example, toughness, aggressiveness, competitiveness, and independence. As women may not be perceived as possessing these highly sought-after masculine traits, they may be rejected in favor of men candidates. These

women leaders stressed that biologically men and women are different, and roles such as childbirth and some claim rearing newborns and toddlers can be performed only by women. As a result, women are expected to put their careers on the sideline to meet family roles and obligations.

Because of under-representation in corporate C-suites, women leaders still have to fight to break the glass ceiling. Indra Nooyi, PepsiCo CEO, stressed that, for women, the biological and career clocks are not in alignment. Women have to make way to attend to both at the same time with equal dedication and devotion, which is not only difficult but in some cases impossible. Sometimes, taking a break puts women in a backseat for their careers as their peers get ahead, their skills become outdated, and they lose the competitive advantage. In addition, aspiring women leaders have very few women leaders who can be their role models.

Recommendations for Research

An organization's level of gender consciousness determines how well it will be able to confront patriarchal dynamics and facilitate permanent change (Bierema, 2016). Within the context of challenges facing women leaders in India, research is still at the nascent stage. Numerous research avenues would provide illumination of the issue and encourage discourse on the challenges Indian women leaders face, specifically in the corporate sector. One area of study that has surfaced recently in emerging countries is the presence of women on boards. In their study of board gender diversity in emerging markets, Saeed, Belghitar, and Yousaf (2016) used institutional theory to contextualize the organizational factors that determine women's representation on boards. In India, these scholars found that gender diversity decreased when the state is the main shareholder. This finding was in direct contrast to de Jonge's (2014) finding that women were more likely to be included in Indian state-owned firms. Further research could shed light on the issue and resolve the discrepant findings. Studies involving women's presence on boards might also examine whether gender diversity on boards has any impact on policies in the organization to encourage the talent and development of women employees.

As some sectors of the Indian economy, including banking and aviation (Pande & Moore, 2015), have done better with respect to gender equality, more in-depth understanding of the organizational policies employed in these industries to generate greater representation of women would be beneficial. While prior research has shown that having a substantial number of women in higher ranking managerial positions benefits women at lower level jobs through hiring and promotions (Cohen, Broschak, & Haveman, 1998), would this hold true in Indian corporations? This question provides another fruitful area to explore, as efforts to build women's leadership within senior ranks may be a fast way to have reverberating effects on gender equality further downstream in the organization.

Transformations of culture are slow and take many routes. Scholars, in an attempt to understand different contexts, postulate how these routes emerge and why. Radhakrishnan's (2009) qualitative examination of 60 professional software women in urban India, for example, found that these women believe that family comes before their career, that it is unseemly to be overtly materialistic, and they want to avoid becoming "too Western" (p. 206). IT management in India accommodates what Radhakrishnan terms "respectable femininity", by providing special treatment to women with families. These women are granted the ability to go home earlier when working on tight deadlines and are provided escorts to help them arrive at home safely after working late. Gupta and Saran's (2013) work offers a somewhat divergent finding. These scholars suggested that the Indian woman's support system has "become more understanding of the independent career minded woman making it easier to live and sustain both professional and personal lives" (p. 11). Interviewing 90 corporate Indian women across multiple industries who were born after 1970, Gupta and Saran (2013) concluded that the trendsetter woman sees a professional career as a given. Furthermore, this second generation of women leaders expresses confidence about reaching the top of their fields and indicates their willingness to change jobs more often and even change cities, if necessary (Gupta & Saran, 2013). Future research might reconcile these findings on whether and how cultural values impact career ambition by using more varied methodological data collection with larger sample sizes. Quantitative data would allow for a

multitude of factors to be both controlled for, as well as examined. Further, efforts to reduce gender bias from supervisors, other organizational decision-makers, and men colleagues who do not want to work for or with a woman need to be researched and documented.

Recommendations for Practice

Because organizations need a workforce that can meet the demands of a growing economy, inclusion of best practices such as flexible job hours, job-sharing, telecommuting or part-time options, onsite daycare facilities, and avoidance of overtime requirements (Buddhapriya, 2009; Collins & Abichandani, 2016; Desai, Majumdar, Chakraborty, & Ghosh, 2011; Naqvi, 2011) is needed to improve work-life balance of working women in India. Other types of enlightened organizational support for women could include formal mentoring programs designed specifically for women to enhance career outcomes as leaders and networking programs that encourage women talent to connect across levels and functions in the company (Rashid, 2010).

To thwart culturally pervasive tendencies in organizations, especially among supervisors and managers, that handicap women, HRD practitioners must play a critical role. Bierema (2016) argued that organizations can target implicit bias through training and development to build awareness of women's leadership skills. HRD practitioners can use the "where are the women?" question when personnel decisions are being made to create more balanced gender diversity among leadership ranks (p. 131). Furthermore, when HRD professionals are cognizant of the difficulties women in India face in the corporation, they can develop interventions that bolster the self-confidence of women workers to help eliminate or reduce barriers to success (Collins & Abichandani, 2016).

In addition to progressive organizational initiatives that can help women's leadership in India emerge, societal change is also needed. Emerging markets struggle with institutional codes that are highly gendered. For example, women in India remain responsible for the bulk of the household chores and childcare, adding additional stress to those women who opt to work outside the home (Chawla & Sharma, 2016;

Desai et al., 2011). In their case study of eight women in senior leadership positions in India, Chawla and Sharma (2016) reported that these senior women leaders, working in a variety of manufacturing and service industries across multiple functions (HR, finance, marketing, communications), indicated that spouse, parent, and in-law encouragement served as key enablers to their career progress. Macro elements that can influence both women and their support systems are education and the media. Education for women enhances their resumes, allowing for more career options to be pursued. Furthermore, education potentially delays marriage, which has been linked to higher levels of stress for women who opt to work outside the home (Akhani, Rathi, & Misha, 1999). The media can also send messages about acceptable behaviors of men by portraying husbands taking an active role in both homecare and childcare. Finally, policy changes at the government level could also be enacted to bolster the women labor force. As gender quotas, used by India in the 1980s, resulted in an influx of women into the teaching profession, this policy could be deployed in other sectors to spur women's labor participation (Pande & Moore, 2015).

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9

Women Entrepreneurs in India

Rajeshwari Narendran and Anjana Vivek

The wheel of development of any economy moves on entrepreneurial ventures of men and women equally. There is a positive linkage between entrepreneurship and societal development. Moreover, the contribution of women has been noteworthy in spinning positive changes toward uplifting society. Their contributions to the economy have become significant in almost all parts of the world (Pandian, Jeyaprakash, Pathak, & Singh, 2012).

Pre-independence economic activity in India was mainly related to farming. Industries were controlled by the British. It was only after inde-

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pendence that entrepreneurial activities picked up. Before 1991, Indian business success was a function of ambition, licenses, government contacts, and an understanding of the bureaucratic system (Jain, 2011). Decisions were based on connections rather than the market or competition. In 1991, the Indian government liberalized the economy, thus changing the competitive landscape (Jain, 2011). Government policies were altered to encourage Indian entrepreneurs. Post-independence, equality, and freedom grew, and, with it, the perception of women changed in society. Women crossed socio-cultural barriers and entered almost every field. There are several factors that initiate entrepreneurship characteristics among women; the basic entrepreneurial initiators are personal motivations, socio-cultural factors, ease of available finances, and government schemes and support, along with business environment (James & Satyanarayana, 2015).

The Government of India and its authorities at the national policy level, including the legislature and social development stakeholders, equally recognize the need for inclusion of women entrepreneurs in the mainstream. This is well reflected as a national agenda. Women's entrepreneurship is also seen as a strategy to combat rural and urban poverty. Increased efforts for women entrepreneurs are seen as a powerful tool for empowering and transforming society, thus synthesizing social progress and economic development (Chandwani, Bulsara, & Gandhi, 2015). Self-employment (for survival) and entrepreneurship (for long-term economic development) are increasingly important for women as a way to ensure income from work in the context of declining job security, especially in the context of government jobs, and the necessity for and flexibility of work contracts across India (Ray & Ray, 2011).

The willingness and acceptance to adopt self-employment is the new trend with Indian youth as the Government of India launched the ambitious scheme called Start-up India on January 16, 2016, to facilitate, support, and foster the spirit of entrepreneurship. There are several institutional arrangements, both at central and at state levels, such as nationalized banks, state financial corporations, state industrial corporations, district industry centers, and voluntary agencies, like FICCI's Ladies' Organization (The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and

Industry), AWAKE (Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka), eMERG (Engineering Manufacturing Entrepreneurs Resource Group), and national alliance of young entrepreneurs, all of which have been engaged in educating, empowering, and developing women entrepreneurs in the country. Added to these are national and international women's associations that have been "setup with a purpose to create a congenial environment for developing women entrepreneurship in rural and urban areas" (Pandian et al., 2012, p. 268). In order to support entrepreneurship, the Government of India has come up with the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise Act (MSME) 2016. Due to the contributions of the SME sector to women entrepreneurship and economic growth in the country, the Government of India is committed to the promotion and development of this sector. A few examples of important organizations providing support and offering schemes for the development of the ventures include the Small Industries Development Organization, the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development, the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, technical consultancy organizations, state-level institutions, the Khadi Village Industries Development Scheme, the Small Industries Development Bank India, the National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board, and many others. The growth of modernization processes, such as industrialization, technical change, technology adoption, increasing use of mobile phones for a variety of activities and transactions, urbanization, and migration—all encourage and aid entrepreneurs in growth and value creation.

For the purpose of this chapter, we reviewed research papers and articles on women entrepreneurs in India, the social culture of India, the status of women, and some success stories of women entrepreneurs. We also conducted an online survey of women entrepreneurs who have experienced the management development program specially crafted for aspiring women entrepreneurs at both the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and the Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur. To probe further into our survey findings about issues and challenges of women entrepreneurs, we interviewed several women entrepreneurs who responded to the online survey. Our experiences as entrepreneurs, trainers, and mentors to women entrepreneurs have also informed this chapter.

Women Entrepreneurs in India

An entrepreneur is, by definition, an individual who runs a business and assumes all the risks and rewards of a given business venture, idea, goods, or services offered for sale. He or she shoulders the risk in the hope of subsequent economic gain (Suganthi, 2009). The first time the Government of India (1984) defined women entrepreneurship, it was noted as “an enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of employment generated in the enterprise to women” (Sivanesan, 2014, p. 28).

Entrepreneurship is typically considered a masculine domain.

Even the heroic attributions referring to successful entrepreneurs are masculine and macho, thus creating a perception of less friendly environment for women entrepreneurs (Lewis, 2006). Thus, it is no surprise that the number of women entrepreneurs is proportionately less worldwide, particularly in India. According to a survey by the Global Entrepreneurship & Development Institute (GEDI), the USA ranked highest on the Women Entrepreneurship Index in 2015, whereas India lagged at 70th place. There is a need to create a strong and dedicated economic framework to support and encourage women entrepreneurs in India.

The number of women entrepreneurs in India has grown over time, especially in the 1990s (Jain, 2011). Many women in India are turning to self-employment and small business as a means of economic survival. In the interviews conducted with women entrepreneurs for this chapter, it became clear that women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased utilization of modern technology, increased investments, finding a niche in the export market, creating sizable employment for others, and setting a trend for other women entrepreneurs.

While women entrepreneurs have demonstrated their potential, the fact remains that they are capable of contributing much more than what they already are doing (Thaked, 2016). For Indian women, however, the roles of mother, wife, and daughter are still believed to be predominant; there is expectation that childcare, housework, and care of elderly relatives are important duties of women (Valk & Srinivasan, 2011). To gain more flexibility and control on their work and personal obligations, women start their own business. They contribute to job creation, innovation, and

economic development of the nation through their entrepreneurial activities (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015). Many women in India have started their entrepreneurial journey subsequent to traumatic events in life, such as divorce, death of husband, destitution, or social rejection. However, the new trend is aspiration for more economic liberty, and women are ready to leave corporate jobs and opt for being self-reliant as entrepreneurs (Goyal & Prakash, 2011). Contemporary women entrepreneurs have emerged as strong economic contributors to global prosperity and growth (Davis, 2012).

Studying risk-taking behavior and innovation in entrepreneurial ventures of women, Sebastian (2015) elaborated that women's choices of ventures, despite their willingness to engage in economic activity, is limited by personal, familial, social, and economic factors in Kerala, a southern state in India. However, the hidden entrepreneurial potential of women has extended beyond their kitchen and household chores and activities, of mainly the 3Ps, that is, pickle, powder, and pappad (pappad is a side dish), and they have started entering fields related to the modern 3Es, that is, energy, electronics, and engineering. Although women were initially associated with food and garment start-ups in India, in recent times, women have been participating in technology and finance markets, according to our interviews. In 2015, several technology-oriented women-run start-ups occurred, such as LimeRoad, Kaaryah, Zivame, CashKaro, and Sheroes, and media tech companies, like YourStory and POPxo. Women entrepreneurs have also actively participated in gendered, home-based, and lifestyle entrepreneurship in India, for example, home-based food businesses, enterprises in fashion and tailoring, kindergarten services, beauty salons, and so on (Padhi & Padhy, 2013). Skill, knowledge, and adaptability in business are the main characteristics that drive women to engage in business ventures (Padhi & Padhy, 2013).

A form of new venture business creation, however, has its own set of unique challenges for women. These include fear of failure, lack of optimism and confidence in business as compared to men, and, most importantly, difficulty in securing start-up financing. At present, women's entrepreneurial role is limited in large-scale industries and technology based businesses in India. Even in small-scale industries, women's participation is significantly lower than that of men. As per MSME Annual Report

2014–2015 (Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India), only 10.1% of micro and small enterprises were owned by women and only 9.5% were managed by women.

Women's Motivation for Entrepreneurship

Many studies indicate that women start businesses for fundamentally different reasons from men counterparts (FICCI-FLO Report on Entrepreneurship Trends, 2011). While men start businesses primarily for growth opportunities and profit potential, women most often set up businesses in order to meet personal goals, such as achievement and accomplishment (FICCI-FLO Report on Entrepreneurship Trends, 2011). These perspectives match those we found in our interviews with men and women entrepreneurs.

It is unfortunate that it is only in times of crisis that a woman initiating a start-up is not looked at with doubts and questions (personal interaction with Patricia Narayan, September 1, 2016). In the past century, women have gone from starting a venture solely as a source of income in times of crisis or in the absence of a man who is earning the family's livelihood to beginning an enterprise for the sake of work life balance. For some women, a start-up is a means of pursuing their passion; for some it gives meaning to life and is a source of self-worth; and sometimes it is a means for social work (personal interaction with Pankti Jog, September 4, 2016).

In many instances, urban women consider financial success as an external confirmation of their ability rather than as a primary goal or motivation to start a business, although millions of women entrepreneurs will grant that financial profitability is important in its own right (Ray & Ray, 2011). Rural and economically weaker entrepreneurs have bread winning as a primary motive compared with esteem needs, unlike urban and well-to-do women entering business.

Women also tend to start businesses about ten years later than men in India (Majumdar, 2009); many women discover it to be very difficult to put their heads back into business after attending to home and child rearing responsibilities. They often have no idea how to prepare a business plan, source manufacturers, find the market for their products, and estab-

lish the new venture. It is difficult for them to get business and legal advice and develop the knowledge and managerial skills required to establish their business locally and internationally (Majumdar, 2009).

Family Traditions and Women Entrepreneurs in India

Traditionally, women have played the role of a caregiver. Not only in India, but world over, they have always shouldered household responsibilities and looked after their families. A working woman is still expected to pay complete attention to her family and manage her work around them. Women tend to put their families before their aspirations. Sometimes, in the absence of an understanding and supporting family, they discard their ambitions. Sometimes, their maternal instinct overpowers the need for any other form of fulfillment in life. As determined through our survey, the biggest barrier a woman faces in pursuing a business-related entrepreneurial goal is herself. She tends to doubt her ability and capacity to deal with something new and the changes involved. Women are more likely to exhibit feminine traits (e.g., compassion, nurturance, sensitivity to the needs of others) that are viewed as particularly important in the family domain, whereas men are more likely to exhibit masculine traits (e.g., aggressiveness, decisiveness, independence) that are viewed as particularly important in the work domain. Chatwani (2015, p. 139) noted that “women entrepreneurs report similar structural biases as women in employment, particularly with work life balance.” Gender roles and stereotypes are instilled during childhood by gender socialization processes and reinforced during adulthood with interpersonal and social interactions. In our interviews, we observed that a significant number were hesitant to approach strangers for security reasons and hence sales, business development, and more are affected. Further, they often looked for approval from the family, particularly the men, before making decisions as required by Indian traditions and social structures. This can hinder their growth as they may fail to take advantage of opportunities. There is only one listed company in India founded by a woman entrepreneur, Biocon Ltd.

Drivers and Challenges for Women Entrepreneurs in India

In the earlier segment we have presented researches and articles on women entrepreneurs mainly in the Indian context; however, to understand the various drivers, issues, challenges, strengths, and weaknesses of current women entrepreneurs, we conducted a survey of first-generation women entrepreneurs from various parts of India. In regards to their motivation to start a new venture, 31.1% said it was because they had a viable business idea, 14.8% said it was their need for economic independence, 13.1% said it was a professional qualification that motivated them, 8.2% said it was inspiration from friends and family, 6.6% attributed it to role models, and 4.9% said this was the only option available to them.

As for their core strengths, women offered the following in order: appropriate skill/knowledge, 72%; good managerial qualities, 69%; creative and logical thinking, 61%; innovative ideas, 55%; readiness to work hard, 55%; and help from family, 52%. In terms of weaknesses, women offered these qualities: lack of negotiation skills, 79%; lack of financial expertise, 72%; lack of availability of funds, 58%; lack of time, 47%; and lack of preparedness in facing difficult competition, 43%. In terms of growth plans, 49% wanted to expand their business in the near future, 31% wanted to establish their own brand, 15% wanted to diversify and expand, and the rest wanted to play it safe by running the business as it was. These women are confident in using their acquired knowledge and skills in business ventures.

The Centre for Women Business Research in the USA conducted research and found that women in India have serious concerns about six major challenges: access to information; education, training, and counseling; access to capital; access to markets; access to networks; and validation and recognition as entrepreneurs by government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other corporations and businesses (Kumari, Kaushik, & Lodha, 2010). The problems of women entrepreneurs were identified as technological stagnation, under-utilization of capacity, lack of vertical mobility, lack of family support, shortage of finances, inadequate facilities for storage, inadequate marketing, stiff competition, low mobility, family responsibilities, and social attributes.

As a result of challenges faced by both men and women entrepreneurs, more than half of businesses started do not survive beyond three years. Here we list some of the challenges that are unique to or more prevalent with women entrepreneurs in India.

- **Time management:** Women entrepreneurs, in particular, have a much harder struggle with time management. Women have to play a dual role, as a housewife and as income earners in India. Women have the responsibility of preparing food for the family, besides fulfilling their societal role of nurturing and caring for children and tending to elderly members of the household (Vinay & Singh, 2015). The vast majority of women feel guilty for not paying enough attention to their family.
- **Business knowledge:** Quite a few women entrepreneurs admit to a lack of business and financial acumen. This may be the result of their social upbringing and the ecosystem (the socio-cultural texture in India). In India, women are generally not seen as primary breadwinners or wage earners. In fact, this is actively discouraged in certain communities and societies. As a result, women entrepreneurs struggle to understand business issues and management of money. The new millennium has seen a significant increase in women's representation in various professional streams and an increasing number of successful women entrepreneurs in India. And yet the age-old debate on gender diversity and confining women to stereotypical roles continues to change very slowly in media, business, public platforms, and social reform forums in India (Krishnan, 2013).
- **Lack of confidence:** Lack of confidence is not uncommon among women entrepreneurs in India. Women may feel that they do not know or are not educated about some aspect of running their business. Lack of confidence could also be related to soft psychological aspects, such as inhibition to communicate, dealing well with people, and managing teams. Though many women are turning to self-employment and small businesses as a means of economic survival in India, there may be a lack of confidence considering legal matters, traditions, customs, and cultural or religious constraints, due to their exposure to these factors and constraints from their family and society, thus causing more constraints influencing women opening their own businesses (Ray & Ray, 2011).

- Lack of money: Financing issues are not limited to women entrepreneurs alone; however, women find it much harder to raise money from external sources, whether through debt or through equity from angel investors (those who do not want their names made public, yet still contributing funds), either by way of venture capital or through strategic investment, based on our interviews. It is difficult for women to get funding from financial institutions (Thaked, 2016). Lack of labor force parity and access to first-tier financing is a major hurdle. Most women tend to turn to family and friends to fulfill funding requirements.
- Source networking: Women entrepreneurs often express that they have difficulties in networking. They feel uncomfortable attending programs or events alone; they look for a colleague, another entrepreneur, or even a friend to accompany them. This is typically the result of their social upbringing in India in which they are discouraged from venturing out on their own to places that are out of their routine. Every time a woman wants to start a venture, she is faced with questions such as: Who will take care of the household? How will you handle the finances? Many women entrepreneurs shy away when it comes to networking in conferences and meetings, especially if these are outside of working hours or are hosted in late evenings (personal interactions with 30 new women entrepreneurs at Start-up India summit held at Mumbai on May 20, 2017). Such social constraints pull down women entrepreneurs' business opportunities.
- Security and safety issues: These are paramount for women and have increased in recent times. Because of these issues, women hesitate to approach potential vendors, customers, and potential investors and lenders. As safety and risk minimization is the key, they may be unable to schedule meetings late in the evenings and in distant locales, hence losing out on potential opportunities for growth, given the social texture and taboos in India. The feeling of insecurity multiplies when women face problems from suppliers, buyers, and potential entrants, leading to a preference to operate only among clients whom they know. For example, products are sold to relatives and friends, and suppliers tend to be people already known. It is important to understand the stifling of initiatives caused by the socio-cultural texture in India. Based on our interviews, women have identified some cities in India as

safe to host a business, like Bhubaneswar and Salem, while some places in certain cities, like Noida near Delhi, as totally unsafe to expand or host their businesses. This in turn restricts their success in business.

Ways Forward

Women entrepreneurs need to improve their personal, social, and professional competencies through development programs to grow their business ventures successfully (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015). As more women become founders and co-founders of businesses, India will benefit, as will the women and their families, if these women entrepreneurs can realize their potential. Some solutions need to be explored such as education of investors regarding awareness of the potential of women entrepreneurs to create value; and training programs by educational institutions, industry bodies, and others. The women entrepreneur programs at IIM Udaipur and IIM Bangalore (Management Development Program for Women Entrepreneurs and Management Program for Women Entrepreneurs, respectively), among others, are great examples of these institutes being proactive in training women entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs in business planning, strategic thinking, marketing and brand building, finance, people management, communications and presentations; and more. We need many more such programs for larger numbers of women and society to benefit in India.

Women need to find solutions within themselves. For example, they could take steps to improve their understanding of business issues and financial matters with the help of incubation centers spread across India and development programs conducted by government and non-government agencies such as Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India or Indian Institutes of Management; work to increase their self-confidence through attending training programs; look up to role models; work with mentors; take efforts to communicate better with the help of professionals, friends, and family members; and network and leverage the networks they have. Women need to be aware that their work life may not show a linear and steady growth path and may show dips and highs as they learn to balance their responsibilities and time, especially as life situations change.

Here are some additional suggestions regarding steps that could be taken:

- Government bodies and departments, both state and national, working with women in India could take steps to disseminate information about the programs that are available for women entrepreneurs and their benefits. In recent times, many states have been coming out with schemes for promoting entrepreneurship, such as Make in India, Start-up India, Mudra Yojana, and Skill India (all schemes launched by the Government of India to promote skill sets and entrepreneurship). Special attention needs to be given to women-owned and managed businesses with information sent out using print and social media platforms.
- Government in India may explore the creation of a one-window information portal where all details of schemes and facilities that exist for women are set out and easily accessible.
- Such an information portal may also have information about women entrepreneur associations that are operating at national and state levels in India. Women entrepreneurs in India will then have information about associations and forums where they can attend programs, showcase product and service offerings, get visibility, and network and connect with other women in business.
- Banks and financial institutions, especially those in the public sector, and development organizations in India have programs that are tailored to women entrepreneurs. While these are detailed and available on paper, in reality, when women approach those in charge, they find it difficult to understand the program requirements and how to apply for them. Efforts must be undertaken to make programs easily accessible so that women who meet the criteria do not face unnecessary difficulties and hurdles if they want to participate.
- Organizations and departments could identify successful women entrepreneurs whom they have supported or identified and showcase them as role models so that other women can be inspired with these success stories. Often women entrepreneurs in India do their work and do not speak much about their success or feel comfortable promoting themselves. As a result, the number of successful women in business appears to be even smaller than they are in reality. Third parties and

government bodies could identify and list such successful women in business.

- Women can also be proactive. One step could be taking time to educate themselves in managing a business. She could attend management development programs, workshops, and seminars lasting a weekend, a few weeks, to a couple of years. She could attend forums that provide opportunities for networking and learning from peers. Today many such programs are available in India at subsidized or low cost and sometimes even zero cost sponsored programs run by IIM Bangalore and IIM Udaipur and AWAKE, eMERG, and more.
- There are quite a few exclusive networks for women entrepreneurs in India. Women entrepreneurs in India should check out some of the groups and join them. Some of these groups even help facilitate sales among members. Women entrepreneurs can take advantage of technology and network online. In addition to saving travel time, this helps women work on flexible schedules, which allows them to manage home responsibilities. Of course, women need to take care of basic aspects, such as security and risks while going online, just as they would in the offline world.
- Today, technology has made many courses, content, and information available and easily accessible even on mobile phones. Video lectures and talks by experts are available with the click of a few buttons. Some of these are being offered at no cost by top-ranked universities, professionals, and other experts. Women entrepreneurs in India should leverage these and try out a few courses, podcasts.
- Women entrepreneurs in India who seek funding are less likely to get funding as compared with men. Women should approach persons and institutions with a history of investing in women who display their capability and potential. Such persons can be identified through women in their entrepreneurial networks and their referrals after doing due diligence. This strategy will help women make their pitch effectively to a receptive audience.
- The strategy of working with people who believe in the business and the entrepreneur's capability can also help when women entrepreneurs in India want to target new customers and vendors. This is especially helpful when they are new to business or have not yet developed a

brand that people recognize. It is easier to close deals with those who treat women in business as serious professionals. This becomes evident as women establish themselves and her business with tangible results to showcase her capabilities to manage and grow her venture. The Government of India and state governments give priority to the companies having more than 51% shareholding or registered under the names of women.

- Safety and security are a concern in India, not just for women entrepreneurs, but for women in general. Women entrepreneurs need to take the necessary precautions in face-to-face and virtual meetings and social media discussion forums. Some women have found a way around this issue by taking a friend or family member when attending a meeting. This is not an uncommon strategy, and most women entrepreneurs in India will have requested a friend, colleague, or man relative to accompany them. Technology has helped in some ways as meetings need not be face to face, and people are comfortable with telecoms and Skype calls for initial discussions. Preference for virtual meetings was expressed by women entrepreneurs attending the program conducted by the British Council at the Join the Dialogue- Social Enterprise and Women Empowerment conference on April 7, 2017, at New Delhi Institute of Management, New Delhi.
- Work spaces, departments, and organizations in India may also take steps to make their work areas more accessible to women with women-friendly policies. Everyone interacting with women at work should be given training and awareness on fair treatment of women, so that women who come to workplaces are treated professionally and with respect. When such general attitudinal changes happen in India, then it will be a great boost to make women entrepreneurship a better professional choice for many aspiring women.

Thus, if Indian women are to be successful entrepreneurs, they are to be encouraged, educated, trained sufficiently, and be supported rigorously to handle their entrepreneurial situations (Kumari et al., 2010). If integrated efforts are taken up by the government, women, entrepreneurship associations, and women networks, then women's business owner-

ship will not only continue to grow, but it will thrive. As suggested by the Centre for Women's Entrepreneurial Development, USA, unleashed and unfettered, women's entrepreneurship can provide fuel for economic growth and opportunity for communities around the world.

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Indian Women's Leadership in the Government Sector

Pradeep Kumar Misra and Garima Singh

Women's empowerment is a prime global concern. A United Nations' report emphasized the relevance of women's empowerment for countries across the globe (UN, 2015a). The need for women's empowerment in India can best be described by Swami Vivekananda (Wikisource, 2012, 2014):

There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing. (para 13)

There is no hope for that family or country where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness. For this reason, they have to be raised first. (para 8)

From ancient times, sages, saints, philosophers, and thinkers have advocated *yatra naryastu pujoyante, ramante tatra devata* (wherever women are worshipped, gods live there). But we see a gradual decline in the status of

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women from ancient to medieval times. Providing a brief history of the changing position and role of women in India during different historical periods, Shrivastava and Chaudhary (2011) noted, “Up to the end of the Vedic Period, when Buddhism flourished (around 600 B.C.) women were given an honoured place in social life” (p. 2). In support of this statement, they cited two examples from *Atharva Veda* (the fourth Vedic collection and the second oldest Indian text):

Atharva Veda 14.1.6: “Parents should gift their daughter intellectually and with the power of knowledge when she leaves for her husband’s home. They should give her a dowry of knowledge.”

Atharva Veda 7.38.4 and 12.3.52: “Women should take part in the legislative chambers and put their views on the forefront.” (p. 2)

They further observed that the status and rights of women in India deteriorated in subsequent periods. These periods are termed as 500 BCE–1200 CE (Classical Period), 1200 CE–1500 CE (Early Muslim Period), 1517 CE–1788 CE (Mughal Period), and 1750 CE–1947 CE (British Period). And about the present situation, Shrivastava and Chaudhary (2011) commented, “although the law says ‘equal’; women in the political sphere, as elected representatives in state legislatures and the Parliament[,] are still very few” (p. 5). Fortunately, some sectors of society and the government have realized the need and benefits of women’s participation at work and are emphasizing gender equality and women’s participation in various spheres of life.

In fact, India needs to transform its enormous women’s workforce into an effective human resource to achieve the status of a developed country. Women along with men are crucial for the continuous and inclusive socio-economic development of India. Gender inequality in the workplace impacts the growth of a nation significantly. A report by McKinsey and Company (2015) highlighted that, by bridging the gender gap in the labor force, India stands to gain as much as \$2.9 trillion additional annual gross domestic product (GDP) in 2025. This report further emphasized that, if India is to become the world’s third largest economy in 2030 (after the USA and China), it cannot afford to continue bypassing its over 600 million women from equal opportunities in

the workforce. A recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report stated that India stands on the Gross Empowerment Measure at 135 of 147 countries (UN, 2015b). Furthermore, according to Women in Politics 2017 map published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women (2017), India ranks 148 globally in terms of representation of women in executive government and parliament. These are clear evidence that much needs to be improved, particularly in the proportion of seats held by women at all levels of the government, the focus of this chapter.

In this chapter, we present a historical review of women's participation and contribution in the government sector since Indian independence; highlight the initiatives, legislation, and reforms undertaken by the Indian government for promoting women's leadership at all government levels; discuss the current issues and trends related to women's leadership at all levels of government in India; and suggest potential measures to promote and strengthen women's leadership in the government sector in India. These discussions are based mainly on a review and analysis of policy documents, reports, and other available literature and statistics related to women's leadership in the government sector in India.

Women's Leadership in the Government Sector Since Independence

The government sector in India is composed of political leaders, that is, the members of the Indian Parliament, the State Legislative Assemblies, and the administrative officials working in various capacities in different states and at the central level. The government in India starts at the grass-roots with 638,000 villages and moves up to the state and central government levels. At the time of independence in 1947, there were hardly any women in higher administrative (at that time, civil service) positions in India. Now, women recruits represent approximately one-fourth of each IAS (India Administrative Service) batch and often rank near the top in the civil service competitive examinations (Benbabaali, 2008).

Administrative Services

The government administrative services at the central level in India are divided into two main sections: All-India Services and the Central Services (GOI, 2010). Officers of the All-India Services, on appointment by the Government of India, are placed at the disposal of the different State Governments. These services include the following:

1. Indian Administrative Service (IAS)
2. Indian Police Service (IPS)
3. Indian Forest Service (IFS)

The officers of the Central Services, on the other hand, wherever they are posted, serve the Government of India only. These Central Services include the following:

1. Indian Foreign Service (IFS)
2. Indian Railway Service
3. Indian Postal Service
4. Accounts and Auditing Services
5. Indian Customs and Central Excise
6. Indian Ordnance Factories Service
7. Indian Defence Estates Service
8. Indian Information Service
9. Central Trade Services

In addition, every state has state level administrative services. After independence, women started securing administrative positions. For example, Anna Rajam Malhotra became the first woman IAS officer in 1951 and Kiran Bedi was the first woman to become an IPS officer in 1972. Kiran Bedi is credited with introducing several reforms at Tihar Jail, which gained worldwide acclaim and won her the Ramon Magsaysay Award (Asia's premier prize and highest honor for transformative leadership offered every year in remembrance of Philippine President, Ramon Magsaysay) in 1994. At the state level, Meera Chadha Borwankar became the first woman IPS officer in Maharashtra cadre in 1981 and also the first

woman in its 150-year history to head Mumbai's Crime Branch Department in 2001. Since these initial appointments, a good number of women have joined different administrative services at All-India, central, and state levels, and many more aspire and attempt to join these services every year.

At this juncture, women represent approximately one-third of civil service recruits, for example, in 2016, 846 men and 253 women were successful (PTI, 2017). Women have topped the civil services examinations (one of the toughest examinations in India) (Vaishnav & Khosla, 2016) third year in a row: in 2015, Ira Singhal; Tina Dabi in 2016; and now Nandini K.R. in 2017 (Jain, 2017). In the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examinations, in 2015, four of five top ranking examinees were women (PTI, 2015a). Women are continuously securing administrative positions in the government sector. Another notable aspect is that some of these women opt for different political roles and responsibilities in later stages of their lives. For example, Kiran Bedi, a former Indian police officer, joined politics after retirement and now serves as Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry (a union territory of India).

In spite of these success stories, the picture is not rosy when it comes to women's participation in administrative services in the government sector in India. A report from Ernst and Young (2013) put the situation into perspective:

Women make up 51% of the population. But even in the country ranked number one in our Index, Canada, they account for only 45% of its public sector leaders. In Japan, the world's third-largest economy, women account for 2.5% of public sector leaders. In India, the world's largest democracy, only 7.7% of public sector leaders are female.

As another issue, the majority of women joining the administrative services are from an urban background, whereas the majority of women live in rural areas. Benbabaali (2008) reported that, among the women recruited in the IAS between 2001 and 2005, fewer than 15% had a rural background, as against 43% among the men (a situation that, in our view, remains unchanged). These statistics reveal two things: first, women's representation is increasing in the administrative services in India, and, second, this representation is less than adequate, unequal, and needs to be further improved.

Political Positions

On the political front, only a few women leaders have had the opportunity to lead the nation. Indira Gandhi was the first woman Prime Minister of India. She served in the office from 1966 to 1977 and then again in 1980 until her assassination in 1984, making her the second longest serving Prime Minister in India. In 2007, Pratibha Devisingh Patil took her oath as President of India and served in office until 2013. But, in general, women are underrepresented in Indian politics. One irony is that those women, who have been successful in politics in India, as in many other Asian countries, are often riding on the coattails of a male relative, not on her own as a woman, or she is a pseudo-leader with her husband or male relative calling the shots and enjoying the power.

Since Independence, there have been only 16 women chief ministers of different states (of 29 states and 7 union territories), which is much fewer than men serving in these positions. Although exact data are not available for comparison, an example from the state of Uttar Pradesh (the most populated state of India) might be instructive. Of 21 Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh so far, only two have been women (not even 10%) (Wikipedia, 2017). The situation is more or less similar in parliament. At present (2017), in the lower house of parliament (*Lok Sabha*—members of the lower house of parliament are elected directly by the people), of 542 MPs, 64 are women (a mere 12%) (Parliament of India, 2017a), and in the upper house of parliament (*Rajya Sabha*—the members of the upper house are elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly of the States), of 242 members, 28 are women (a mere 9%) (Parliament of India, 2017b). At present, there are no mandated seats for women neither in the lower nor in upper house of parliament. Here it is worth mentioning that a bill for providing 33% reservation to women in the *Lok Sabha* and state assemblies is pending since the last 20 years (Gilani, 2017). The scenario for women Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) (elected directly by the people) across all state assemblies in India is even worse, with the national average of women representation being a pitiable 9% (Rao & Kamapantula, 2016).

In 2017, women constituted 13% of the Ministry. In the present Council of Ministers, of 78 ministers, 10 are women (National Portal of India, 2017). At the same time, there are three women chief ministers, that is, Vasundhara Raje, Mamata Banerjee, and Mehbooba Mufti,

serving in the states of Rajasthan, West Bengal, and Jammu and Kashmir, respectively. Also, Sumitra Mahajan, the speaker of *Lok Shaba* is a woman. Srinivasa and Siddegowda (2015) underlined the participation of women in politics by observing, “the encouraging fact is that in India, the largest serving political party is led by a woman ... the youngest chief minister happens to be a woman which indicates that women are emerging on taking responsible positions in active politics in India” (p. 102). At the local level, representation of women can be seen in *panchayats* (village councils) and municipal councils. In India, a majority of the population (833 million, approximately 70% of the total population) live in rural areas (villages) (PTI, 2011), and approximately 40% of elected representatives in villages and municipal councils are women (Verveer, 2011). Verveer (2011) observed,

Thanks to a quota that was adopted many years ago, today more than a million women across the subcontinent have been elected at the local level to serve on Panchayats—village councils or municipal councils—beyond the seats reserved for women. Their success has been described as a silent revolution in democracy in India. Research studies show that the women-led councils deliver much-needed public services more effectively. From sanitation to education, they target public resources to benefit the community and are responsible for considerable gains at the local level. (para 10)

Summarizing the impact of women's participation in *panchayats*, Singh (2009) claimed,

Women's entry into Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), both as members as well as heads of Panchayats, has pushed them into the policymaking and policy implementation process in a very big way. Whether their husbands, fathers, brothers or other relatives compelled them to take up these roles, or whether they assumed these roles as dummy incumbents, one thing is certain: they crossed the rigid boundaries drawn through their households by the same male relatives. (para 10)

This representation of women in the political process at the grassroots level is a good sign for Indian society and women as well. But this cannot be claimed in general as global comparisons show that India lags behind in terms of participation of women in leadership positions at higher levels

of government. India ranks 148th globally in terms of representation of women in executive government positions and parliament, according to the IPU and UN Women (2017). The data showed that Pakistan ranked 89th; Bangladesh 91st; and Afghanistan, 99th in the subcontinent. Rao and Kamapantula (2016) observed,

While the global average for Women in Parliament stands at 22.4%, India is at the 103rd place out of 140 countries with a mere 12% representation. Within Asia, India is at the 13th position out of 18 countries. Countries like South Sudan, Saudi Arabia have better Women representation in Parliament than India. (para 1)

Rao and Kamapantula (2016) further highlighted that, among BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) nations, India stands 4th in terms of women's representation in parliament. And among the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, India's rank is 5th. Nepal, with 29.5% women in such positions, leads the SAARC group, followed by Afghanistan with 27.7% MPs (Member of Parliament). Pakistan and Bangladesh, at 20% each, have much better representation for women in their national parliaments than India (IPU, 2017; World Bank, 2017). The majority of countries having better women's representation ensured it by creating constitutionally mandated quotas or reservations for women. For example, Nepal has 29% legislated quota for women, Afghanistan has 28%, and Pakistan and Bangladesh have 20% seats reserved for women (Rao & Kamapantula, 2016).

Similarly, women's entry into administrative services is also a cause of concern. George (2011) reported that, "the number of women getting into the services is not steadily on the increase in spite of the steps taken to promote women entrants to the services and it fluctuates from year to year" (p. 155). But the trend is changing now, as reported by Harikishore (2016):

Increased intake of lady officers is the latest and most visible trend in IAS selection. Out of the total 4572 IAS officers all over India (as on January 1, 2009), only 604 are women (Just 13.72 per cent). But, in the last five years, out of the 465 candidates selected to IAS, 101 are women (22 per cent). The intake of women has been almost steady over the last five years and it is far ahead of the overall percentage of 13.72% women in IAS. (para 6–8)

The above statistics of women's leadership in political positions indicate the need to do much more for securing the participation of women and increasing the representation of women in leadership positions in the government sector.

Initiatives, Legislation, and Reforms by the Indian Government for Promoting Women's Leadership in the Government Sector

Fundamental duties as enshrined in Part IV-A of the Constitution of India contains a duty related to women's rights, that is, Article 51(A)(e) that expects the citizens of the country to promote harmony and the spirit of common fellowship among all people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women (GOI, 2015). The local *panchayat* system in India provides an example of women's representation at the local government level (Shankar, 2014). At the local level, through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment of 1993, a very important political right was entrusted to women. A 33% reservation in seats was mandated at different levels of elections in local governance, that is, at *panchayat*, block, and municipality elections, and representation for castes and tribes was mandated proportional to their population.

These amendments mandated *panchayat* elections throughout the country and a large number of women were elected after the reforms were implemented in April 1993. Since the 73rd amendment that came into force in 1993, the actual representation of women in *panchayats* has progressively increased over the three rounds of elections (usually *panchayat* elections take place after every five years) and often exceeds the mandatory one-third proportion. For example in 2008, the total number of elected representatives was 2,820,707 and of these 1,037,621 were women, that is, 36.79% women and 63.21% men (GOI, 2008). Recent data published in year 2015 reveal that there are 2,917,336 elected representatives (ERs) in the country, while the number of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across 28 states/union territories is 1,341,773; that is, 46% women and 54% men (PTI, 2015b).

The Draft National Policy for Women, released in 2016 and approved in 2017 by a group of ministers, makes specific provisions regarding participation of women in the government sector in India (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2016). The policy recommended the following:

1. Establish mechanisms to promote women's presence in all the three branches of the government including the legislative, executive, and judiciary. Women's participation in the political arena will be ensured at all levels of local governments, state legislations, and national parliament with at least 50% reservation for women in local bodies and 33% in state assemblies and parliament to provide more responsive, equitable, and participatory development.
2. Increase participation of women in civil services, judiciary, and corporate boardrooms through appropriate modules for guidance and counseling, coaching, and provision of financial incentives and quotas.
3. Increase participation of women at all levels such as in trade unions, political parties, interest groups, professional associations, and business/private sector. (p. 11)

Similarly, in the Staff Selection Commission Notice for Combined Graduate Level Examination, 2015 (Staff Selection Commission, 2015), there is a small but significant announcement on top of the advertisement: "Government strives to have a workforce which reflects gender balance and women candidates are encouraged to apply" (p. 1). These provisions lead us to conclude that the central and state governments in India have realized that women empowerment is essential for India's socio-economic development and the government is striving toward achieving that through proposing programs like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (save daughter, educate daughter), Working Women's Hostel (WWH), and Support for Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) (Ministry of Women & Child Development, 2017).

However, some specific measures, like executive training for women, mentoring schemes, recognition and support for women, flexible working arrangements, and setting of targets and tracking progress (OECD, 2016) will also be helpful in promoting women's leadership in India's government sector.

Potential Measures to Promote and Strengthen Women's Leadership in the Government Sector by Other Stakeholders

The following measures can be useful to promote women's leadership in the government sector in India.

Improve the Education Sector

Achieving complete literacy will be a significant boost to increasing the share of women in government leadership positions. The National Policy on Education (1986) in India recognized that the educational system must play a "positive interventionist role" (p. 8) in changing social values and attitudes that obstruct women's rights and equal participation not merely in all aspects of development, but even in education (GOI, 1986). Considering this observation, government should take concentrated efforts to encourage and support education and skill development of women. As a unique initiative, the Indian government can earmark a stated proportion of the annual budget for education of women. Improvement in educational levels and skills will motivate women to look for different career opportunities. The other effective measure will be to utilize the existing curricula in school to develop relevant skills and awareness among girls as suggested by a report edited by Thinely (2014):

The entire curriculum can be remodeled to ensure knowledge and understanding of local governance and leadership at the earliest stage of formal and non-formal education. Student project assignments, service learning, and field learning experiences could emphasize the development of knowledge, attitude and values concerning community leadership with a special focus on local government. (p. 141)

Streamline Governmental Programs for Women Empowerment

As discussed earlier, different agencies of government are running programs for the welfare and empowerment of women like skill training, extension support, and credit and other enterprise-related services. But sometimes such schemes create confusion among women as to which to choose. To make things easier for beneficiaries, there is a need to streamline these government programs. For example, ministries, such as the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, are running a number of programs for women's empowerment, like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (save daughter, educate daughter) *Scheme*, Support for Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW), among others. There is a need for all of these programs to be coordinated under one Ministry as one scheme with different provisions for different groups. This streamlining would ensure the timely release of funds and their channeling to the appropriate departments and agencies. On a personal front, it will be easier for women to access all schemes through one location to avail benefits such as reducing poverty, improving health and education outcomes, becoming skilled, accessing networks, and making financial gains. Getting these opportunities at one place will certainly have a meaningful impact on women's journey toward raising their voice in society and aiming for leadership positions, including those in government bodies and agencies.

Conduct Gender Sensitization Programs

Irrespective of societal changes, gender inequality still exists in Indian society. And this attitudinal mindset is one of the main reasons for less representation of women in leadership positions throughout society, including government bodies and agencies. The organization of gender sensitization programs within government bodies and agencies with a prime focus to break gender stereotypes and help women realize their inner potential and strength will be a useful step to bring an attitudinal

change in the government. In Indian society, three stakeholders play an important role to suggest the career choices for the majority of youth: parents, neighbors, and relatives. Therefore, the government and the civil society must plan and organize programs to help communities change their mindsets and realize the leadership potential of women in government positions. This orientation will help girls opt for career choices leading to leadership positions in the government sector. In a similar vein, a report commissioned by the Department of Foreign Trade and Affairs of Australia (2016) suggested, "Where women's representation in leadership and formal decision-making is low, the role of women's organisations and coalitions is particularly crucial for ensuring women's perspectives are heard" (p. 7).

Organize Societal Change Programs in Villages and Rural Areas

The parity of women has increased somewhat based on a number of measures, movements, and awareness campaigns, but there are many things that need to be changed in the Indian context. Traditional practices, like preferring boys over girls, the dowry system, the perception of women as a burden, and female infanticide are deeply rooted in the Indian social structure, particularly in villages and rural areas where the majority of the Indian population lives. Therefore, the organization of specific societal change programs in villages and rural areas may help the masses to think from new perspective and support women in their future endeavors, though such changes are very difficult to engender. The hope is that these societal change programs will motivate parents to value daughters and send them for higher education. Some of these better educated girls will hopefully opt for leadership positions, including those in the government sector. This discussion can be aptly summarized in the words of Schukoske (2015):

Millions of rural women are unaware of their equal rights as Indian citizens, or of ways in which they can become involved in their village-level institutions. This means women are kept from participating in the essence of Indian democracy and decentralised governance. Structured, local

means of engaging women to learn about their rights goes a long way in helping them become well-informed citizens who will eventually take on leadership roles to improve their lives and their communities. (para 4)

Promote Women for Leadership Self-Help Groups

There is an age old saying in India, *God only helps those who help themselves*. For example, *Atharva Veda* 20.18.3 says, “The Devatās (Gods) desire him who offers worship and works hard. They do not like him who loves to sleep and is lazy. The hard working person gets great praise from them.” Like this saying, the formation of women for leadership self-help groups will be a good place to start. These self-help groups would enroll women from nearby places as members and organize useful educational and career information programs for these members to showcase leadership opportunities for women in the government sector. The responsibility of these self-help groups would be to foster feelings of collective development, social harmony, and to play an active role in creating social change. The main aim of these self-help groups would be to motivate and support group members to realize their potential and aspire to the betterment of self and society. The learning and success stories from their own community might motivate young women to pursue a leadership position in the government sector. Mekwana and Macwan (2015) corroborated this claim:

Though there still stand challenges of enormous magnitude with regards to the participation of women in the political affairs of the country, but the SHGs for long have contributed towards developing women leaders at the grassroots level. The space infused confidence in several women and led them to participate in the local governance process. (para 1)

Provide Online and Offline Career Counseling Platforms

One of the major reasons for lack of women in leadership positions in the government sector is that most are not aware of career opportunities.

Keeping this challenge in view, government and social organizations need to establish online and offline career counseling platforms for women. These platforms could help women choose their careers by offering advice and counseling regarding their aspired professions and providing constant psychological support as they explore careers. These platforms may help women to share and express their experiences, concerns, fears, and motivations with each other. This sharing may ultimately help women to break through barriers and be ready to aspire and get leadership roles in the government sector.

Conclusion

There has been a change in the acceleration of women in leadership positions in the government sector in India. Modernization has brought social change for women's empowerment, and the Indian government has implemented a number of schemes that have helped in the promotion of women's leadership. As a landmark initiative, 33% of seats have been reserved in the *panchayats* to strengthen the political representation of women. Along similar lines, a Women's Reservation Bill to reserve one-third of seats in the lower house of Parliament of India, the *Lok Sabha*, and in all state legislative assemblies for women is pending but not yet acted on. These initiatives aim to help women to emerge as a strong group, changing the prevailing political practices, nature, and content of debates in the legislature and take care of women's issues in policy formulation and implementation (Panda, 2006). On the other side, many women have acquired leadership positions in politics and in topmost government services, such as the IAS, IPS, and so on, by their hard work, zeal, determination, and grit. But India still lags behind many countries in offering leadership positions to women in the government sector. Therefore, both central and state governments should establish mechanisms to accelerate women's equal participation and equitable representation at all levels of the political process and in government services.

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11

Women in Leadership in the Education Sector in India

Madhulika Sagaram and Prabhjot Kaur Mahal

The goal of this chapter is to connect existing documentation on women leaders in education and the recognition due to women leaders in education across K–12 grades and higher education in India. India is the second largest system of education between ages 6 and 18 years and higher education in the world, after China (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2005). India has 1.5 million schools with over 250 million children enrolled; approximately 25% are private schools catering to 40% of children within 6–14 years of age (Podar, 2017). Approximately 6.4 million teachers work in schools in India, of which 2.9 million are women (Chappial, 2012). The percentage of women teachers has been increasing steadily in recent years in India. The increase in women teachers was 43.5% in 2008–2009, 44.8% in 2009–2010, and 45.5% in 2010–2011.

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This shift began in the 1990s, with the government launching Operation Blackboard, reserving 50% of teacher jobs for women (Chhapial, 2012). Is this trend shaping or impacting leadership of women in education?

India has a long history of higher education, starting with established educational centers of learning in the ancient cities of Taxila and Nalanda (Scharfe, 2002). Higher education has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of universities and affiliated colleges since independence. The number of universities has increased from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. The higher education system in India boasts of 45 Central Universities, 318 State Universities, 185 State Private universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, and 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) (Indian Institutes of Technology [IITs]—16, National Institutes of Technology [NITs]—30, and Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research [IISERs]—5) and 4 Institutions (established under various state legislations). “The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase with just 500 in 1950 growing to 37,204, as on 31st March 2013” (MHRD, 2016a, para 1).

According to the numbers provided by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 2011, of the total of 666,971 academicians in India, 35.7% are women (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). Women constitute only 38.5% of lecturers, 31.1% of readers and associate professors, 25.5% of professors, and only 3% of vice-chancellors (Morley & Crossouard, 2015).

Defining women leaders in education in India is of paramount importance, as leadership can be defined in many ways. There are several leadership theories and leadership traits that can be attributed to women leaders in education. However, a clear description of characteristics and features enables appropriate identification of women leaders in education. Thus, we provide an overview of women leaders in education in India from pre-independence era until contemporary times to showcase the spread and depth of work done by women leaders in education in India.

This chapter was written based on a thorough literature review of women leaders in education in India and interviews. The research also included identification of women leaders in education in all spheres and disciplines using authentic sources of documentation of their work, such

as portfolios, presentations, and work samples, along with newspaper articles about their work. Along the same lines, the first part of this chapter has been structured to discuss women leadership in formal, informal, and semi-structured schooling and higher education in India. The second part focuses on challenges and barriers faced by women leaders in education and the opportunities available to them to move into significant leadership roles. In sum, this chapter brings to light the contributions made by women leaders in all spheres of formal and informal K–12 and higher education, shaping the development of education in India.

Women Leaders in Education in Pre-Independence India

India has a history of women in education prior to independence from the British in 1947. Women leaders, like Savitribai Phule, Asima Chatterjee, and Rajeshwari Chatterjee (described below), laid the foundation for educational reforms and social engagement for women in India. Savitribai Phule was possibly one of the first women in modern India to publish her work in the form of poems in 1854 (Pandey, 2015). She discussed many important subjects, like education, discrimination based on caste, and child welfare, along with social reforms. Savitribai developed her own voice and social agency at a time when women of all classes were ruthlessly suppressed and had limited access to any form of empowerment (Pandey, 2015). Savitribai's commitment to education for women took the form of a school that she started in Maharwada with Sagunabai in 1847. Later, on January 1, 1848, she and her husband started the country's first school for girls at Bhide wada in Pune (Agnihotri, 2016).

Another trail blazer, Janaki Ammal, a young girl from Tellicherry, Kerala, did her Bachelor of Science (BSc) and BSc Honours from Queen Mary's and Presidency Colleges in Madras. Ammal moved to the University of Michigan, USA, to get her Master of Science (MS) in 1925. "From a young age, Ammal was endowed with the courage to make the choices and the versatility to change course and adapt where and when required" (Subramanian, 2007, p. 8). Years later, in 1957, she was elected to the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) as the first woman

scientist elected to any of the science academies in India (Balasubramanian, 2014). She was also awarded the Padma Shri (the fourth highest civilian award in the Republic of India) in 1957 for her contributions to scientific research, teaching, and development of plant science in India. An eminent plant mycologist, Subramanian (2007), said of Janaki Ammal, “Ammal’s life reflects of her experiments in settling for a career and more importantly, for a mission” (sic.; p. 6).

Prominent woman educator, Asima Chatterjee, based in Calcutta, was an inspiring scientist, an insightful educator, and a teacher who played a prominent role in the formation of the science education policy in India. She was a well-known chemist in 1917, and her research centered on organic chemistry of natural products resulting in the development of anti-convulsive, anti-malarial, and chemotherapy drugs. During times when women seldom participated in activities outside their homes, she paved the way for women in India to participate in the society and contribute through multiple roles in balancing research, teaching, and personal life, which was unheard of in that era (Basak, 2015). She was a prolific researcher with a keen penchant for knowledge regarding natural plant resources and their uses as medicine.

Rajeshwari Chatterjee is popularly known as the first woman engineer from Karnataka, Mysore State, who went to the USA in 1947 to pursue higher education after she was recognized as having extraordinary potential (Sen Gupta, 2010). After obtaining a PhD degree in 1952, she returned to India and joined the Department of Electrical Communication Engineering at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) as a faculty member in 1953 (Jayaram, 2002). She was the only woman faculty member at the Indian Institute of Science, and she and her husband, Sisir Kumar Chatterjee, set up a microwave research laboratory where they conducted pioneering work on microwave engineering. Through her achievements and contributions in the field of science, she played a pioneering role in social reform and the emancipation of women (Bhat, 2010). Her contribution to education ranged from engineering to science, social engineering, and the plight of women. She was of the view that women in the middle class were choosing careers, but they turned out to be money-making machines for their husbands and families. She was a vocal critic that, in many families, women were not allowed to keep the money they

earned for themselves. She was also a critic of industries and business establishments that exploited women from lower middle-class families; because of their financial constraints, such women were paid low wages and were forced to work for long hours. Her scientific pursuits turned into a strong passion for women's empowerment toward the end of her life (Jayaram, 2002).

There were also women leaders like Durgabai Deshmukh who dedicated themselves to the cause of uplifting underserved and underprivileged women (Suguna, 2002). Durgabai initiated several educational institutions under the umbrella institution called Andhra Mahila Sabha (Andhra Women's Congregation), which to this day provides training, development, and formal education opportunities for women from all strata of society. Scores of children, especially those having special needs, benefit from her schools for the hearing impaired and visually challenged (Menon, 2011). These women leaders in education in pre-Independence India were remarkable transformational leaders who focused on motivating and stimulating society through their intellectual work and exemplary action.

Women Leaders in Post-Independence India

Engagement of women in education and associated development continued into the years after independence. While significant work has been done by many women leaders in education in the last seven decades, we have identified women leaders who have, through their work and life, contributed to all aspects of formal and informal education in India. Education in India is mainly focused on schools addressing primary and secondary levels and colleges catering to intermediate and higher education. However, a majority of innovations in education have mushroomed in informal education, often consisting of alternate schooling options, such as learning cooperatives and learning centers offered by non-profits and non-governmental organizations (Raghavan, 2017). This section is an inclusive exercise providing an overview of innovations, reforms, and reconceptualization of education across the formal and informal schooling and learning media in India.

Formal Schooling

Formal schooling in India can be divided into preschool, primary and secondary schooling, and higher education. India has a massive system of government schools, approximately 1.5 million (MHRD, 2016b) run by state and central governments, along with a robust private school segment consisting of thousands of schools across the country (Cheney et al., 2005). According to FICCI (2014, pp. 6), there are 818,000 government schools, 309,000 municipal schools, 157,000 private-aided schools, and 181,000 private-unaided schools in India. However, the private school system constituting 25% of all schools in India catering to 40% of all school-going children (FICCI, 2014, p. 7) is largely affiliated with education boards set up by either state governments or the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training). Over the last 15 years, educators, such as Kiran Bir Sethi (Ashoka Fellows, 2008), have established formal mainstream schools with international curricula. While such schools are gaining momentum in some places in India, they are not affordable for all. Shaheen Mistri has been successful in establishing formal schooling in the non-profit and non-government segment through the Akanksha Foundation (Rege, 2011).

Miniscule numbers of women faculty in undergraduate and graduate education are leaders, such as Padma M. Sarangapani, who have made contributions to the field of education beyond their job description. Sarangapani is an Associate Professor and Head, CHRD (Center for Human Resource Development), at the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore, an All-India Institute of Interdisciplinary Research and Training in the Social Sciences. She was also the Dean of the School of Education at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences from 2012 to 2013. Her contributions extended to the National Council for Teacher Education and the National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (Institute for Social and Economic Change, 2016). She has been involved in many important innovative teaching programs in Education, including Elementary Education programs at Delhi University and the Master's program in Education at TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences). She also worked extensively in collaborating with the Government of Karnataka

on the improvement of the District Quality Education Program with a focus on improving district and sub-district resource institutions. She is the editor of *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, published by SAGE, and is on the International Editorial Board of the *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. Disciplines such as design and architecture have also seen shining examples of women leaders like Judy Frater and Meenakshi (in some parts of India, family names are not used). Frater has lived in the Kutch area in India for the last 25 years working with artisans and founded Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya, the first design school for artisans (*Times of India*, 2009). Meenakshi and her husband, Umesh, started Puvudham Nursery and Primary School and the Puvudham Learning Centre in Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu, India. Meenakshi built the school in a literal sense, using alternative architecture and made it environment friendly to offer a nurturing space for children (Srinivasan, 2008). The women leaders discussed above in formal schooling environments have been transformational leaders due to their ability to engage people around them and across institutions in the country and provide a personal touch to personalize the experience of education.

Informal Schooling

Though alternative education platforms form a small component of education in India, they have contributed significantly to the development of a child-centric pedagogy in an education system that is largely teacher-centered based on education boards set up by the government. Learning cooperatives and alternative schools are critical components of the alternative schooling system in India. Learning cooperatives are centers in which a group of parents and teachers come together to pool resources to provide a learning environment for children in or near nature based on the children's learning needs. Learning cooperatives are centers in which parental involvement results in the building of a community of learners with varied interests often focusing on learning through experience. In 1983, Gurveen Kaur started the Center for Learning, a learning cooperative in Hyderabad, and has been a pioneer in leading the movement in learning cooperatives (Kaur, 2013).

Another pioneer in informal schooling has been Jane Sahi. Jane moved to India from England in 1968 in search of understanding Gandhiji's life and work. She contributed 38 years to the development of education based on principles of peace and rooting education with the earth, making connections between the head, heart, and hands when working with earth. In 1975, she started the Sita School, an alternative school that helps each child reach his or her potential through holistic and child-centric education. The school emphasizes learning through art and constructing a pedagogy suitable to children's learning needs (Taleemnet, 2005).

Sushma Sharma is a women leader in education who, like Jane Sahi, was fascinated by Gandhi's Nai taleem (Gandhi's education philosophy). Sushma restarted Anand Niketan in Wardha, Maharashtra, based on Gandhiji's philosophy of education. Anand Niketan is a school run in the same premises where Gandhi started an experiment in education in 1937. It is based on his educational philosophy within the purview of modern requirements of boards and curriculum developed by these boards (Elassery, 2015).

Another prominent woman leader in alternative education in India is Prema Rangachary, Director of Vidya Vanam in Anaikatti in Tamil Nadu. Prema started the school to create an environment of nurturing and care for children. She has played a key role in the development of the Balwadi program (an early education program run by the Government Center) and runs an education initiative of tribal and underprivileged children challenging many of the modes (e.g., language and school structure) and methods (approaches) used in conventional education (Rangan, 2014).

Another compelling component of alternative education in India has been home schooling. Urmila Samson in Pune, Maharashtra, has been a pioneer in the home schooling movement in India. Some groups of parents have chosen to school their children at home as they have come to understand and believe that they can provide the best learning environment for their children. In addition, the unschooling movement (based on trust that parents and children will find paths that are most suitable to them rather than depending on organizations and policies or regulations to decide what is best for them) has brought together parents concerned about a lack of appropriate learning environments in schools. They have been pushing for informal structures to immerse

their children in experiential learning and learning by doing through travel and working with their hands and using earth and natural resources in their play. Urmila is a visible face of both the unschooling and home schooling paradigms in India (Ratnakumar, 2014).

Apart from alternative schools and learning centers, non-profit organizations led by women leaders have contributed to education in India on a massive scale. Music Basti (Music Township), a social enterprise and nonprofit organization, was set up in 2008 by Faith Gonsalves to raise awareness about at-risk children in Delhi and across India. Its greatest success has been the continuity of mainly self-funded projects, led by a collective of artists and volunteers. Gonsalves has conducted research and documented the impact of music-related projects and their relevance for learning and development of life-skills, such as confidence and communication (*Press Trust of India*, 2016).

Madhulika Sagaram (one of the authors of this chapter) of Adhya Educational Society started the organization as a non-governmental organization and evolved with the scope of its work as it turned into a social enterprise with a non-profit focus (Atmakuri, 2013). She has designed and implemented science education programs for 25,000 children in Hyderabad, integrating arts-based learning with science and mathematics. She has also developed pedagogy to accelerate learning for children, especially focused on enhancing the pace of emotional development to reach age-appropriate levels (Young, 2014). She is an artist, teacher, researcher, and a development worker who is passionate about improving the quality of education in schools in India. Her vision has enabled the collaboration of several schools and children through an empathy project called Gift Compassion (Mander, 2014). This project has been successful in creating a culture of sharing and compassion through a gift economy reaching thousands of children across the country (Rajadhyaksha, 2013).

Several women leaders heading non-governmental organizations have also left their mark on the education scene in India. Notable among them are Anuradha, who started the Tulir School for tribal children in Sittling near Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu (Thulir, 2016); and Ranjana Baji, who started the Sadhana Village School (Sadhana Village School, 2016) near Pune so that children could engage with a vibrant social life and various natural phenomena in untouched settings.

Kiran Bir Sethi of Riverside School, Ahmedabad, has created an impact by reaching out to millions of children across the world through her Design for Change initiative (Design for Change, 2016). Jaya Ramchandani, founder of The Story of Foundation (while this name may seem strange, it comes from selecting different festival stories every other year, e.g., Story of Light in 2015; Story of Space in 2017) has spearheaded a movement toward public pedagogy and engagement of the public through festivals at the intersection of science and art (The Story of Light, 2015). At the interface point where education, government engagement, and outreach meet, Usha Raman has spearheaded a magazine, Teacher Plus, which reaches thousands of teachers across India. She is the Head of the Department for Communication Studies at the University of Hyderabad (Education Plus, 2014). The women leaders discussed in the informal education section are successful leaders who provide effective management of change through their initiatives as described above.

Barriers and Opportunities for Women in Education in India

In this section, we elaborate on the barriers challenging and opportunities available to women leaders in the education sector in India.

Barriers

Although women in India join the education sector in significant numbers, they tend to be concentrated and limited to pre-primary and primary school teaching and rarely rise to positions of authority and leadership (Learning Curve, 2014). The proportion of women in the teaching profession at the school level is high. District Information System for Education (DISE) in 2011–2012 indicated that about 50% of all primary school teachers and approximately 40% of all secondary school teachers in India are women (Learning Curve, 2014). Earlier reports from DISE estimate that 66.15% of primary school teachers in urban areas and 37.2% of primary school teachers in rural areas are women (Learning Curve, 2014).

As the above statistics indicate, women are concentrated in primary school teaching, while men tend to be represented in larger numbers in high school (Learning Curve, 2014). In the Indian education system, teacher success and education leadership are based on either student success in the form of percentage of marks scored in exams or on the years of teaching experience, both of which do not necessarily correlate to a teacher's skill set or competencies (Podar, 2017). The management of institutions promotes teachers based on the grade level they teach or their seniority, both of which are often not an indicator of an effective teacher or leadership. This means that either a primary school teacher is promoted to a higher grade, or a high school teacher is promoted to take up other roles within the institution, such as head of department, coordinator, vice-principal, or principal based on seniority without focus on ability, skill, or development of leadership qualities (Podar, 2017). With 60% of teachers in high school being men, there are greater chances that men are promoted to leadership positions than women.

However, the skills and competencies that are required for an effective teacher and a leader in education vary, and a great teacher may not be a great leader. As teachers do not perceive their own growth and success to be in their own hands, they often do not undertake professional development for leadership in education (Podar, 2017). Despite reported success in recruiting women as teachers, many government initiatives, such as OP (Operation Blackboard) and DPEP (District Primary Education Programme), for instance, have suffered from problems of implementation because they have been implemented across the country without taking into account the diversity of contexts, circumstances, and challenges encountered in different regions and communities across India (Aggarwal, 1998; Dyer, 2000).

Work-life balance has been the single most hindering factor keeping women from reaching and sustaining a position in the hierarchy of schools (Goel, 2003; Mittal, Sharma, & Srivastava, 2015; Patil, 2002). Women in India generally juggle multiple roles, often shuttling between managing work and a career, family at home, and fulfilling other social obligations toward society. Women are also facing the dilemma of finding a non-existent solution to family-work conflict, and women working in a leadership position with a rigid schedule, as found in schools, are prone to this challenge

more than those with flexible schedules, such as women leaders in higher education (Mittal et al., 2015). This could be one of the reasons why women choose jobs like teaching that provide flexibility for work-life balance over leadership and administrative positions in education that require rigid schedules and stringent personal time commitment (Learning Curve, 2014).

There is an old belief that women are less capable and less efficient than men and hence deserve unequal salaries and wages for the same job. While this seems to be a trend across the world, women leaders in education in India seem to be at the forefront of taking the brunt of this injustice. While, government pay scales for teachers across India are higher than its Asian counterparts, private schools are able to short-change teachers, the bulk of whom are women teachers with very low pay because of the bureaucratically set minimum wage and market-driven demand and supply (Saha, 2017). The 12th Planning Commission of the Government of India recognized and listed gender inequality as a key issue with a major focus on making institutions of higher education more women friendly (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). The All India Survey of Higher Education provided gender segregated data for 2011, the first of its kind in India, but nothing has been done in subsequent years. Despite considerable efforts by some scholars to mine data regarding representation of women in higher education in India, data collected on the hiring of women leaders in higher education and their pay in India has been quite uneven and not accessible for India as a whole (Morley & Crossouard, 2015).

Apart from the choice of profession and salary disparity, women educators face many other obstacles in their journey from teaching positions toward leadership positions in education. Blum and Diwan (2007) discussed that the most important obstacle faced by teachers is the perception of low status granted to primary level teaching as a profession (Ramachandran, Pal, Jain, Shekar, & Sharma, 2005; Seetharamu, 2002). It certainly is true that primary teachers receive a very different type of training and qualifications than their secondary school counterparts, as prerequisites for primary level teaching are minimal. While secondary teachers are trained in Bachelor's in Education programs at the university level, primary teacher training is most commonly conducted by State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), Institutes of Education, Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education, and some District Institutes

of Education and Training (DIETs). This disparity in available training could be a hindrance for primary teachers to aspire for leadership roles and positions and since majority of teachers in the pre-primary and primary segments are women, they remain limited to teaching positions (Learning Curve, 2014). Moreover, the lack of a university degree translates into primary teachers who are mostly women not being considered qualified for positions within primary education administration or policy making and, therefore, having little room for professional advancement. Besides, women educators juggle family responsibilities with unpredictable and unprecedented problems at work leaving very little scope and possibility for professional development. Lack of professional development also translates into lesser representation in leadership roles (Learning Curve, 2014).

There are very few women in leadership positions in education, except for women principals in private all girls' schools. It is quite rare to find a woman principal. Given the social expectations of family responsibilities, women rarely have the time to develop their skills or professional development to prepare for managerial positions. Many women begin and end their careers as teachers, with movement or shift from primary to high school level or the subjects that they teach (Learning Curve, 2014). As a result, schools end up mirroring conventionally gendered authority structures of the family and community, where power is vested largely in the hands of men. It is required that more women are recruited into the high school segment and are further groomed into leadership positions. The issues of women leadership in higher education are much worse. Studies have indicated that sexual harassment of women scholars and faculty can lead to women possibly leaving higher education as a career option (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). Bias in allocation of resources for women researchers and lack of transparency in criteria for offering fellowships are also mentioned as possible reasons for low representation of women in leadership roles in higher education (Morley & Crossouard, 2015).

Opportunities

The barriers faced by women leaders in education in India range from widespread patriarchy to lack of decision-making ability and access to power. The same issues can be turned around so that women leaders can

use the patriarchal domains as fertile grounds for breaking stereotypes and charting new avenues and paths for themselves and other women. As discussed in the section on barriers, the K–12 segment consists of majority of women in the lower ranks, but they are not able to break barriers. Support via counseling to create better balance between home and work and workshops to create awareness about various career opportunities for growth and development are some of the first steps to be taken to enable teacher leaders into leadership roles in the K–12 segment. Training and development aimed toward enabling a shift in cultural perspectives and better pay structures for women are the next level of steps to be taken to improve retention of capable women teachers and teacher leaders in the K–12 segment.

According to the All India Survey of Higher Education for the year 2010–2011 released by the Government of India in the year 2013, out of 178 private universities in India, 7 universities are marked and function exclusively for women (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). Whether such measures will boost the entry of women into higher education and enable paths toward leadership roles is yet to be assessed over a period. However, right now, these women-only universities perhaps provide a safe environment for women from all walks of life to fulfill their career aspirations and education goals. These women-only educational environments can be fertile grounds for recruiting and grooming women toward leadership roles.

Empowering women through education and training to be aware of the barriers they face in their professions, careers, and development in education is one opportunity. The majority of the jobs described by non-profits in education are examples of such opportunities for women leaders in education in India. On the higher education front, several recommendations have been made to improve gender equality at institutions of higher education in India. Institutes for women's leadership, capacity-building for women managers and administrators in higher education, and professional development opportunities to sensitize men and women on campuses through workshops and sessions are the first tier of recommendations (Chanana, 2013). Apart from lack of role modeling due to fewer numbers of women in higher education, barriers such as caste, religion, regional disparities, language, ethnicity, and socio-economic status are major factors affecting the rise of women educators to leadership positions (Chanana, 2012). It was also reported that women's

teaching and research experience were misrecognized at entry and networking was more difficult for women due to sexual propriety (Chanana, 2003). These are some issues that may appear as barriers but can also be looked upon as opportunities for a shift in attitude and perception if appropriate interventions for awareness and sensitization are implemented. It has been suggested that the focus on development should be five-fold: women's study perspective, governance, academic leadership, personal, and professional development (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). Currently women only constitute 3% of vice-chancellors and 1.4% of professoriate (Banerjee & Polite, 2011) and there is an immediate need to enable more women into leadership roles and positions across higher education in India. The Government of India in its 12th Five-Year Plan has identified gender disparity as a major issue and has called for an inclusive environment and plans for women in all areas of work and education (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). It has been recommended that glass ceilings and fears over promotions must be addressed to curtail sexual harassment and widespread practices of discrimination (UGC India, 2013). Recommendation by UGC in 2013, have also included establishment of women's study centers and development cells making vice-chancellors accountable for change in practices of harassment of women. Several change interventions have been proposed by Morley and Crossouard (2015) to include, development of a single gender inclusion policy at major universities with gender sensitization to include men and women, establishment of women's institutes on leadership and leadership roles, and making campuses and work environments across the country safe for women. Despite many efforts by several scholars to excavate gender-specific data to create a case for gender equality, there is a dearth of access to statistical data as they are uneven and absent in most cases and unavailable for several parameters including salary disparity, sexual harassment, and non-inclusiveness across India (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). Agarwal (2013) states that in spite of increase in the number of colleges, representation of women and minorities is quite dismal. While these are barriers in achieving gender inequality in leadership positions for women in education in India, these barriers also provide opportunities and help to build a case that much needs to be done toward fulfilling equal opportunity for women and this book chapter is one such step.

It is important that necessary changes are made at the policy level, and men at all levels of authority and work are sensitized about the issues women face in the pursuit of higher education as well as a successful career.

Conclusion

The women leaders in education in India discussed in the chapter worked with determination and confidence. Such leadership helped others achieve difficult tasks with ease and confidence. The women leaders in education discussed above interacted with their people to strengthen their learning experiences in lifelong learning efforts, thus taking inspirational motivation as the next step leading to intellectual stimulation and development of a vision. While a few women have been able to break the glass ceiling, opportunities and exposure to the possibility of equal opportunity, awareness about rights, and orientation toward leadership opportunities are scarce for majority of women educators to be able to rise to leadership positions. Safe spaces must be created in the system so that women leaders at all levels of learning and education in India are empowered to charter their own direction and career ladders.

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12

Indian Women Leaders in the NGO Sector

Yogita Abichandani and Vimal Babu

The Indian non-governmental organization (NGO) sector is also known as the civil or third sector, contrasting it from the public or private sector. It is often considered the third wheel of the Indian economy for generating employment for people with non-mainstream skill sets, providing stability of employment in arenas in which both the public and private sectors have often failed. India has approximately 3,100,000 NGOs (one NGO per 400 in the population) (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2015). In comparison, the USA has approximately 1.5 million NGOs (one NGO per 215.4 in the population) (Department of State Report, 2017). An NGO can be a deceptively simple term covering innumerable service organizations that have varying ideologies, controls, origins, sizes, and

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programs, which then further depend upon philosophies, policies, typologies, strategies, funding, linkages, management, and evaluations. Thus, in the context of this chapter, the term NGOs has been used as an umbrella term to cover various types of organizations, such as voluntary organizations, non-profits, and non-government, as they are often used interchangeably.

Significance of Understanding the Role of Women Leadership in NGOs

Modern economics is a product of specific practices that have emerged out of everyday social discourses and material expressions associated with the production, use, and management of resources. However, historically a significant portion of these resources has largely been managed by men, resulting in inequitable distribution of resources between both genders. One such indicator is inequitable global wealth distribution among men and women. According to the World Development Report on Gender Equality in Wealth (2012), women represent 40% of the world's labor force but hold only 1% of the world's wealth. In terms of pay, too, women earn less than men. The same report states that, in Germany, women earn 62 cents for every dollar; in India, the ratio is 64 cents per dollar; and in Bangladesh, it is 12 cents per dollar. Thus, developmental agencies across the world suggest that, for emerging economies to develop at a faster and equitable rate, it is essential for women of the nation to be included in its development (International Finance Corporation Report (IFC), 2011; United Nations Report, 2000).

In entrepreneurial space, for both men and women leaders to flourish, significant emphasis must be placed on a positive business environment (Mason & Brown, 2014). We contend that the same can be assumed for women entrepreneurs in the NGO space. Developmental agencies, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, as well as Human Resource Development (HRD) scholars (Ghosh, Kim, Kim, & Callahan, 2014; McLean, 2004, 2006; Prasad & Madaan, 2000), have been calling for research on NGO leadership, mainly to identify and push the sector's role in the overall development of an emerging economy and its role in

National HRD. This is even more significant in the Indian context with its multiple ethnicities, diversities, and the sensitive and delicate harmony of the Indian diaspora, which is indicative of identifying the various approaches that can work in a dynamic globalized environment. This chapter responds to this growing call by studying women NGO entrepreneurs in the context of an emerging economy.

According to a World Bank Report (2001), “in no region of the developing world are women equal to men in legal, social, and economic rights. Gender-gaps are widespread, thus creating discrepancy in access to and control of resources, economic opportunities, power, and political voices” (p. 1). It is imperative, therefore, to identify the overarching factors that encourage women in NGO leadership and highlight their role. The factors encompass the Indian national culture, including a diverse social environment, with multiple religions, within which several categories, such as caste, class, social identity, and ethnicities, exist. We have captured some of the lived experiences of this layered existence through interviews of NGO leaders.

Thus, this chapter makes three important contributions. First, it contributes to the limited body of research on women leadership in the layered Indian national cultural context. Second, it offers an inclusive look at the literature at both macro (social culture, education, and government support) and micro (financial support, fear of failure, intersection of class, gender, and privilege) levels that mitigate the successes of women leaders in NGOs. Third, this chapter fills the fragmented literature through dialogue on their roles, challenges, and factors that have lined their stories.

A Brief Overview of NGO History and Current State of NGOs in India

Historically, India has had a culture of *sewa* (service) and *dhana* (charity) built within its culture with philanthropy as a way of life. From the early nineteenth century, this culture morphed and developed into various facets of philanthropy through voluntary and non-profit work that

spread across the nation (Palod, 2014). However, during the Indian independence struggle, the culture of service presented itself in terms of Gandhian service organizations based on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, thus replacing generic societal philanthropy. These organizations were often poverty-centric, involved in developmental work for the benefit of marginalized communities. These organizations started declining around the mid-1960s and early 1970s, creating space for other non-government actors supported by the World Bank, United Nations, Government of India, and foreign funding (Sheth & Sethi, 1991; Sidel, 2001; Vaidyanathan, 2011).

Urban and Rural NGOs

The key difference between urban and rural NGOs lies in the customers they serve. A Google Scholar search yielded 134,000 results on Urban NGOs in India. The topics ranged across providing mental health support; care for urban poor; care for aged population; tuberculosis in cities; environmental issues including waste management and sanitation; and providing basic needs such as clean water, electricity, education in slum areas, menstruation awareness, hygiene, and care, preparation for safe birth, availability of medication, access of hospitals, awareness of sexually transmitted diseases, prostitution, community development for household maids, rag-pickers association, and so forth. A similar search on rural NGOs resulted in 167,000 results that dealt with issues across domestic violence, alcoholism, developing small farmer communities for agricultural diversity, grassroots development, women's empowerment, integrated nutrition and health for mother and child, dealing with marginalization, poverty alleviation, malnutrition, microfinance, biodiesel, tuberculosis management, water supply management, diarrhea and sanitation, and so forth. While there is an overlap in multiple issues, what is different is the nature of management and awareness to manage change, given the environment of the operations. Additionally, as urban NGOs serve different classes and educational strata, their services are customized to a particular niche of customers they are serving (Gold, 2017; Mahadevia, 2001).

Non-Governmental Organizations and Values

Based on the collectivist nature of India (Chadda & Deb, 2013) and the concept of *sewa* (service) and *dharma* (charity as duty) built into the Indian way of living, most non-profits are value-based organizations. They are guided by principles that embody service and charity as the primary purposes of their existence (Jakimow, 2010; Mahajan, 1999). An NGO is often legitimized when these values are displayed and embodied in their everyday work. However, NGOs are also influenced by institutional, social, and political environments, thus allowing its users and other stakeholders to determine its meaning in a given context. Hence, while the primary identity of an NGO comes from its values, its survival depends on legitimizing these values (Jakimow, 2010).

Funding, Support, and Governance

The NGO sector is also called the third sector because of its employment ratio, which is equal to that of the government sector, that is, both sectors employ about an equal number of people. The sector supports a wide range of activities within the *business of human rights businesses* of the Indian economy (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2015; Vaidyanathan, 2011) and is heavily dependent on funding by both government and international organizations. Estimates by the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act Report (2009) showcased that, between 2000 and 2009, a total funding of approximately US \$690 billion was received by the NGO sector, out of which US \$108 billion alone was received in 2008–2009 (Foreign Contributions Regulation Act Report, 2009). No other data have been made available by government agencies to indicate changes in the investment funding of the NGO sector.

The governance of Indian NGOs is covered by various national laws. Multiple laws exist because the primary nature of any NGO is to build capacity and create development, primarily nested in ethical, cultural, social, economic, political, religious, spiritual, philanthropic, scientific, and technological considerations. Moreover, these considerations create a significant lattice of formal and informal groups in various networks and

federations. This lattice is then governed by multiple laws simply because of the limited applicability of any one law or act to cover all organizations that encompass the NGO sector in India (Vaidyanathan, 2011).

Vaidyanathan (2011) has heavily criticized the current structures and laws under which NGOs are governed. One major criticism is the lack of clear data, the efficacy and nature of NGOs, and their types and typical operating forms. However, we have collected and analyzed data through various secondary resources (Vaidyanathan, 2011), including data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (2015), thus creating a classification of different types of NGOs and their services. These data have been aggregated from the webpages of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (2017) and many online data aggregators, (retrieved from <http://www.ngosindia.com/> and <http://www.giveindia.org/>), networking federations providing free data for use by researchers and donors (see Table 12.1).

Table 12.1 Typical forms of NGOs and the activities/issues of activism in which they engage in India

Typical form of NGOs	Type of activities/issues of activism/ examples
Advocacy NGOs advocate or campaign on issues or causes. They do not implement programs/projects.	Ethical treatment of animals (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals)/women's rights/child rights/animal welfare/caste/tribal welfare/population
Consultancy/research organizations work on social and developmental research and consultancy.	Environment/agriculture/health/inclusive development
Training/capacity-building organizations; some NGOs work on capacity-building of other NGOs.	Environment/agriculture/social initiatives management
Networking organizations provide networks for other NGOs in specific fields.	Association for Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development provides networking of rural development NGOs.
Umbrella NGOs are providers and are recipients of funds. Their primary task is delivering projects, but not necessarily implementing the projects directly; they identify projects, monitor, evaluate, and build capacities of other participating NGOs.	Health/water/education/women. CRY is an example of one such umbrella NGO.

(continued)

Table 12.1 (continued)

Typical form of NGOs	Type of activities/issues of activism/ examples
Grassroots organizations directly work with the community. In a sense, all Mahila Mandals (women's community organizations) fall in this category. City-based organizations restrict their focus to city development	Women empowerment/ microfinance/rural development/ re-skilling/arts & crafts/tribal welfare and rehabilitation Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)/children rights/ Agni Foundation/arts & crafts/ disability/waste management
National organizations have a national presence: CRY, concern India International organizations, part of international NGO umbrella organizations.	Culture & heritage/disaster management/water/education Housing and slums/CRY
NGOs receive and disburse grants. Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, India (CARE, India) and Oxfam International are examples.	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, India (CARE, India)/(Oxfam International)/rural transformation
Self-help groups: beneficiary communities form them. Typically women form these groups of ten plus members. In rural Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Tamil Nadu (TN), they are increasing in numbers. They are funded even by commercial banks for productive activities. In a sense they are not typical NGOs.	Microfinance/rural development/ re-skilling/arts & crafts/community development
Religious NGOs: religion-based organizations, many affiliated to international religious groups of various faiths	Church/Islamic religious groups/ Buddhists/Hindu organizations

Note: Approximate representation based on a secondary literature review in India

Women Leaders in Twenty-First Century India

India ranks 132nd of 187 countries on the Gender Inequality Index, which is lower than other South Asian counterparts like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan (United Nations Development Program, 2013). The ranking has not changed significantly over the last four years, with India at 125th rank in 2015 and back to 132nd rank in 2016. However,

the Gender Inequality Index does not even present a complete picture. In spite of its standings related to women's access to education, opportunities for jobs, entrepreneurship, exposure to Western or non-traditional world-views, and breaking away from strict traditional social norms and taboos, India has a long way to go in achieving gender parity, both inside homes and outside in society (Agarwal & Joglekar, 2013).

NGO Sector and Women Leaders in India

Women have made considerable advances in the world, both professionally and personally; but they have a long way to go to overcome the disparities when it comes to workplace policies, especially in India. Collins and Abichandani (2016) identified the struggle of women to continue their growth within the corporate sector and attend to post-marital and child-care responsibilities. Collins and Abichandani (2016), along with Kumar (2015), shed light on how corporate India does not support its women employees, resulting in dismal retention rates of 4% women in senior management positions, 23% in mid-management positions, and 35% to 40% in entry-level positions. However, an interesting phenomenon is observed in the NGO sector when these women enter the NGO sector as an alternate career. After a career break, corporate women leaders are making a lateral move into the NGO sector. What often starts as a thrust into family business (Abichandani, 2012) or into a corporate role (Kumar, 2015) becomes a lateral move for women to the NGO industry in a leadership role, as they engage in the non-profit business as leaders with stronger emotional and economics skills (Agarwal & Joglekar, 2013; Handy, Ranade, & Kassam, 2007). This phenomenon is new but appears to be here to stay. Because of the large variety of NGOs that exist in India, there are large differences between leadership of urban and the rural NGOs, in terms of leaders' higher education levels, exposure, ability to attract funding, and networking support (Singh, Devi, & Jayasurya, 2012). Moreover, NGOs lack a clear pipeline of funding and need to overcome non-supportive legislation and bureaucracy. As a result, the NGO sector is still not considered

an attractive mainstream career option (Handy, Kassam, & Renade, 2002). Additionally, the Indian cultural context plays a significant role in determining career options for women in India with strong views on social status, education, and income. To grasp fully the socio-politico-cultural-economic phenomenon of women leaders in NGOs, an in-depth look is required into the post-colonial, post-liberal era to explore how the sector has gained prominence in India.

Historically, Indian NGOs have been predominantly led by men. Women leadership in the NGO sector in the last seven decades in India is not easily recounted unless one starts with the Indian freedom movement, which saw many women leaders at its helm who later assumed leadership in the non-government sector. Women like Savitribai Phule (leader of the Indian Women's Education Movement), Sarojini Naidu, Padmaja Naidu, Sucheta Kriplani, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, and Kamala Nehru are some of the leaders who led the Quit India Movement—the fight for India's freedom from the British. These women, like the Suffragette leaders in the west, were the flagbearers of the Indian freedom movement. Post-independence, they subsequently took over both political and developmental roles. These developmental initiatives included a wide range of activities, including poverty alleviation, healthcare, refugee settlement, job creation, women's empowerment, and more. These post-colonial narratives of women's leadership thus include their struggles against a narrow socio-cultural ideology (Calman, 1992; Forbes, 1996; Ray, 2000; Sarkar & Butalia, 1995) and economic struggles of the new, growing India.

NGO leaders can play a significant role in supporting the post-liberalization growth of India. It is not sufficient for NGOs in the post-liberal India to be merely participatory or inclusive in nature. In our view, as we observe the civil society discourse, it is now an expectation of NGOs to seek policy changes and develop social structures where none exist. According to research (Kungwansupaphan & Leihaothabam, 2016; Sequeira, Gibbs, & Juma, 2016), this is especially true in the context of developing countries, specifically in organizations where woman leaders head the unit. In a country that does not usually assign women to leadership in general and in the NGO sector specifically, it is essential

to understand the varied contexts through which women leaders have traveled to reach the helm. The interface of Indian NGOs between the grassroots and urban India puts women in a special position in which they have been activists, policy change seekers, development negotiators, and proponents of their own hegemony all at the same time (Baillie Smith & Jenkins, 2012; Sharma, 2008). It is our observation that, in the midst of this confusing socio-political narrative, having women leaders has been often considered as a way to navigate the political space and socio-cultural hegemony. The social fabric of India is woven with these hegemonic forces of caste (a historical system of dividing society into groups that has over time become a rigid, hereditary, and immutable hierarchy—Brahmins are considered intellectuals, Kshatriyas as warriors, Vaisyas as traders, and Shudras as manual laborers) carried through surnames and their profession (Karve, 1958); and women appear to be less threatening to the status quo (Chandra, 2014). “Pragmatic reasons of social status make higher caste women more likely to have the power to combat traditionalist forces and legitimize socially controversial issues related to women” (Handy et al., 2007, p. 11).

Two extreme views thus exist about women leaders working in an NGO environment: (a) an elitist view in which service and volunteerism is a favor to the community and (b) a poor and marginalized person’s call to work at the grassroots level (Mitra & Van Delinder, 2007). Most Indian women leaders and entrepreneurs in the urban non-profit sector are largely from middle or higher income families, often married, from an upper caste background, and with a postgraduate level of education (Handy et al., 2007; Sequeira et al., 2016). However, while this elitist status does give them an initial start, it is their passion and commitment that has allowed them to succeed in these ventures.

Leadership Challenges

Scientists have accepted that women’s and men’s brains are more similar than dissimilar (Hiebert, 2015; Ritchie et al., 2017). A recent study, however, found that there are sub-structural differences due to hormones, thickness of the brain stem, membrane folding of brain, and their life experiences that enhance or repress the brain’s wiring (Ritchie et al., 2017). Given the

large amounts of inconsistent research available, it cannot be assumed that men and women have unequal intelligence and ability to lead organizations (Hiebert, 2015). While there may be significant difference in how gender genetically determines differences in the way in which men and women nurture, approach mathematical problems, social issues, and conflicts, these differences are not statistically significant. Additionally, it may be noted that, although men's and women's brains process information differently, nothing in neurological research indicates that women's brains make them less capable of being leaders. Thus, if it is a matter of correct social environment, training, and nurture, it can be assumed that "female brains should produce the same social performance outcomes" (Hiebert, 2015, p. 3). However, this is the usual argument used to denigrate a woman's leadership abilities. Due to social and cultural boundaries, specifically in the Indian patriarchic culture, it is difficult for women to overcome a lifetime of nurturance that inherently undermines her ability to be a leader.

The legal and social position of women in India is at best an ode to how consumed the Indian culture is by its own historically oppressing patriarchic structures. Socially, this is visible in everyday life when respectable women are always expected to be escorted by any man (including a male child), be back home before dark, and always live under an umbrella culture of *shame*, thus condemning women to a bondage of eternal submission to society's will (Mukherji, 2015). Legally, however, the constitution of India is a positive and liberal document that grants women equal rights, in stark contrast to the reality of women's social and actual lives in India. The Indian judicial system with its flaws further exacerbates women's problems due to significant backlogs in cases of domestic violence, child abuse, family matters, thus making the concept of *gender justice* a faraway reality (Mukherji, 2015). Thus, Indian women's willingness to seek justice in the face of pervasive gender inequality and adversity has paved their path to the forefront of NGO leadership.

India's first woman *sarpanch* (elected head of a village council), Chhavi Rajawat, is an example of such leadership. She was born in the western state of Rajasthan, is an MBA graduate, a rare phenomenon for girls born in this western state of India, and gained experience in both national and international corporations. Chhavi is from a traditional middle-class Rajasthani family, but she had the privilege to be raised by her educated parents and a military veteran grandfather. They instilled in her the

importance of education, and she achieved a postgraduate degree and subsequent work experience. She visited her village, after 20 years, where she felt time had stopped in terms of development. She found them living life, just the way she had left them as a young child. It is then she decided to break the norms within her community and bring about change in the village and its way of life. Breaking norms, however, also meant moving away from gendered traditional customs concerning the role of women. She was able to do that for two significant reasons. One, she was a daughter of the soil as she grew up among the villagers. They had seen her since childhood, (Indian villagers are a close-knit community and usually stay in touch even after the family moves away), thus creating an inherent acceptance due to her family's social stature in the community in addition to her education. Second, she was born in an educated family, a privilege for 50% of the Indian population (Kugler & Kumar, 2017; UNICEF, 2013), that granted her access and exposure to a progressive world.

Chhavi's leadership model was inclusive of the whole group, their collective goals, and progress orientation. Through her leadership, she was able to direct government funding for schools, electricity for all sections and castes in the village, improve access to water pumps for all farmers, invite partnerships of NGOs and government sections for the development of village infrastructure, housing facilities, agricultural diversity, medical camps, hospitals, and doctors. Her work brought her national and international recognition and encouraged women in other villages to take up leadership roles in their village grampanchayat (village council).

Macro- and Micro-Factors Facilitating Women's Success in NGOs in India

In this section, we discuss the relevant micro- and macro-factors that facilitate women's success in the NGO sector in India. Entrepreneurial activity is key to creating a successful venture that supports job creation or empowerment. In the context of an NGO, especially in a developing economy, a male-centric strategic perspective is widely studied, but

barring a few studies, literature is sparse around the discussion of how women manage such enterprises (Handy et al., 2002; Sequeira et al., 2016). There is not much difference in the macro-factors that support women leaders in the for-profit or non-profit sector.

Critical micro-success factors that make NGOs successful include a combination of soft and hard factors. These factors are heavily integrated and interrelated; namely, human capital, social capital, institutional capital, and financial capital, that can increase the rate of success of women in leadership. Socio-economic variables explain these factors, including age, experience, education, caste, income, marital status, and ability to out-source domestic responsibilities, including receiving support from extended and immediate families. Additionally, during our interviews, we found that women leaders have had some volunteering exposure before they eventually headed their units.

The Experiences of Women Leaders in NGOs in India

To understand the conditions and experiences of women leaders in NGOs in India, we conducted extensive interviews with three successful women NGO leaders. Their impactful work and contributions to NGO programs for disabled, poor, and underprivileged people across India have been praiseworthy. They have been inspirations for the young generation. As part of the interviews, the three women NGO leaders were asked broadly four questions:

1. How did you get into NGO activity?
2. What issues did you face?
3. How did you develop as an individual while working for an NGO?
4. What is your leadership style?

A structured interview was conducted either in person or over the phone depending on their availability. The notes were recorded and then transcribed. Explicit permission to use their name was sought to which they readily agreed.

Sumana Bhasin, Joint Director, HelpAge India

Sumana Bhasin is one such woman leader who understands the true meaning of helping others and doing good for the larger community. The organization is a prominent NGO in India taking care of disadvantaged older people. The purpose is to improve the quality of their lives and enable them to lead and excel in different roles. Since her childhood, she was quite caring, passionate, kind, and sincere. She cherished doing meaningful and good work for others who lacked basic amenities.

According to Sumana Bhasin:

My father was a senior officer with the Indian Armed Forces. I received an international education, and I was close to the Mother Theresa Foundation, as well. So, my childhood exposure with the Mother Theresa Foundation introduced me to philanthropic and caring activities. Thus, when I grew up, I decided to pursue my career opportunities to bring change into the lives of deprived and underprivileged ones in the society.

However, my path has not been easy. I faced a lot of challenges being a woman. Generally, my experience in an NGO hints that men counterparts in top positions of corporate houses have a peculiar perspective. And it gets revealed often in their interactions when I meet them for funds support. I often felt that they look down on me and carry negative attitudes toward my contributions as a fundraiser for HelpAge India. I also experienced in several interactions with top executives that they see people in NGOs more like servants with no career options elsewhere. Besides the above challenges, I also observed very closely that the top executives often maintain indecent communication with women leaders of NGOs. My own personal experience reveals several such occasions in which communication was sarcastic. Moreover, indirect comments often hurt my feelings, thus shaking me up from deep within and questioning what I strongly believe in. To my mind, such a misdemeanor and poor attitude of senior executives of top organizations must change for it severely embarrasses and questions the integrity and commitment of women leaders working in NGOs.

Dr. Usha Pillai, Co-Founder & Director, Foundation for Initiatives in Development and Education for All, Pune, India

The interview that was conducted with Dr. Pillai was quite different in terms of her perspectives, reasons, and challenges that she faced in the process of establishing her own co-founded NGO in Pune, India: the Foundation for Initiatives in Development and Education for All. She was highly passionate about helping and caring for others. Driven by her passion, she went on to pursue her doctorate degree in NGO-related studies. The high formal education of Dr. Pillai empowered her to be ready, both mentally and psychologically, to pursue her remarkable work in the NGO sector in India.

According to Dr. Pillai:

In fact, I was so passionate about joining an NGO that I earned my PhD in issues pertaining to NGOs and related solutions. However, I come from an orthodox family, which restricted me on various fronts of decision-making. Nonetheless, I never gave up and persevered, in spite of all odds.

Today, having spent 40 long years of my life dedicated to NGOs, I completely feel elated when I look back. I personally and professionally attained a lot. Technology has been a boon for NGOs in recent times, unlike in olden days when everything was quite a snail-like process. To gain more control and effectiveness, I started my own NGO in the nineties. Being an independent thinker and a modern woman, I love the autonomy to function and perform.

However, the initial days were quite challenging for me. My family support was lacking at the outset. On the contrary, they encouraged me to quit my passion to join NGO as they saw that it was not so lucrative in terms of career opportunities for a woman. I remained firm on my belief systems and committed myself to the work I chose. Perhaps, my firm position helped me endure all pain. I had to face these challenges in the process of successfully co-founding my NGO in the early nineties. In fact, I face different challenges in running my NGO even today. As I was not familiar with the use of technology, I had to struggle a lot in managing operational activities for my NGO. Unlike my initial days, today I see a number of youngsters, particularly young women, are quite technology-friendly.

Nonetheless, when I look back and see my career graph, I feel extremely happy as I contributed to educating underprivileged ones. I feel it was significant in addressing the problems of education in India.

However, much more is needed and my effort is like a drop in the ocean. I wish more and more women would embrace the plethora of opportunities in NGO management these days and take the lead and bring the desired transformational change subsequently. I am grateful to some of my close friends, teachers, and ex-colleagues for their constant motivation and support. They were of great help, at times, when I broke down for not being able to confront financial obstacles.

Anupama Saxena, President, Aakash Maindwal Foundation, India

The third interview was with Anupama Saxena, the President of Aakash Maindwal Foundation, Ghaziabad, India. This NGO provides education support to underprivileged girls aged 6–19 years. The beneficiaries of the project include children, particularly girls from scheduled castes and tribes as listed in the Constitution of India. While primary education is constitutionally mandated as free in India, it is not true when seen from a broader perspective. For instance, hidden costs in education include school fees, fees for clothes, textbooks, snacks, sports equipment, and so on. The pressure of assuming these financial burdens while losing a potential helping hand at home or another household income (child labor is common in parts of Ghaziabad City and other cities in India) often proves to be more than what poor families can bear. In addition, the poor quality of primary schooling eliminates any incentive the family may have to send their children to school. If parents are discouraged from sending their children to school, it is because they feel that schooling is often a waste of time and money. Through one of the programs of Aakash Maindwal Foundation, dropout children are provided with special attention to minimize their problems in schools and provide slow learners with opportunities to improve their learning skills. Besides, Aakash Maindwal Foundation is into health, the environment, and economic empowerment of marginalized sections of society.

According to Anupama Saxena:

I would like to begin by saying that life has been extremely harsh on me. My only son expired a few years back, which collapsed me from within. I was almost insane. I restricted myself and ceased any contact with people in my network and relations, as well. Time is a big healer! With passage of time, I came out of such a heart-wrecking incident in my life. As I realized that my son is no more with me, in his memories, I needed to do something really good for him. Thus, I decided to start an NGO in my son's name, Aakash Maindwal foundation, Delhi. I work with the support of my relatives, friends, and some of the professionals who are very keen and supportive to take my initiative forward. Essentially, my NGO looks after the issues of young, adolescent, and less educated girls. I ensure that I attend to the social problems of such underprivileged girls and try to add value in their life. I strive to become a moral support by helping them make smart choices and better decisions in life. In addition, I also ensure that the impact is more on the process of change. Hence, I even give counseling to parents of these girls, who are under the care and supervision of my NGO.

However, I do come across challenges pertaining to fund-raising. In the initial years, my savings and earnings from a job have been used to fund the requirements of an NGO. To some extent, my relatives have been able to support me, financially. Gradually, I got more help and support from people through networks.

I feel people are awakening and changing for the better now. They have enlarged capacity to empathize with needy people. When I look back, I personally feel that I had great learning in the overall process of supporting and encouraging these young girls. Often, I had to speak with reluctant parents and convince them to send their children to school. As the girls are at a tender age, I help them understand the gravity of challenges they may likely face in the future and the plethora of opportunities when they grow up as adults. Moreover, I would constantly motivate young girls and try to instill positive attitudes in them. This could help them in confronting varied issues that are likely to come their way.

All in all, I am happy that I am doing a job that is close to my heart. I feel that my NGO is able to impact and change the conditions of young, underprivileged girls who are deprived of even small bits of happiness.

Thus, all three women leaders have one important aspect of their personality in common. They have been go-getters. They never stopped until they achieved their goals and targets. They became inspirations for many

by their constant effort, perseverance, and ability to bear disappointments in their career, family, and life.

Women NGO Leaders' Ideology and Motivation

A significant aspect of non-profit women leaders has been their ideologies and motivation to start working in NGOs as volunteers and eventual leaders. During the interviews, we found that these leaders have had personal or harsh experiences that propelled them into this non-profit work based on their empathy and desire to channel their grief or anger. The ideology and motivation that is visible from each of the interviews allows us to get an inside view of their struggles. A common ideology shared by these women leaders was the linkage between education/awareness, empowerment, and the everyday struggles. These leaders were socially sensitive and able to marry controversial ideas to reach the ideological space that could create resistance and question the status quo. The resistance also fed their motivation to continue doing their work even when facing external challenges. One of the primary motivations obviously is the desire to serve others selflessly. Their harsh experiences contributed to their initial ideas on how to serve the needs in the community and achieve self-actualization (reached through their personal experiences) with a desire to achieve noticeable change to keep the cycle going.

Women NGO Leaders' Self-Assurance and Evaluation

The three factors of passion, perseverance, and exposure were essential to the success of these leaders. They often quoted their strong will (apart from family support) that has determined their success in the ventures they have undertaken. Their exposure to non-profits either from a young age or from developing/healing the self always made working in NGOs an important career decision. These leaders felt that they were extroverted and self-confident and had the ability to network and navigate the bureaucracy. Their idea of being ambitious and able to take risks aided to their self-assurance.

Challenges Faced by Women NGO Leaders in India

We have identified three main challenges that hinder women leaders in the NGO sector in India, based on the literature and our interviews. The first and primary challenges faced are institutional factors. Institutional factors include legislation, funding, transparency, accountability, and social standing. The changing face of legislation in terms of funding/capital (both national and international) and also the changing governance structures are hindering factors (Mitra, 2011). Because of a lack of resources, access to international funding can be competitive. Furthermore, donor-driven NGOs are highly dependent on grant-giving organizations to dictate their organizational structure, taking away their autonomy. These organizations expect NGOs to hire volunteers based on their personal contacts rather than hiring professionals with experience and qualifications. Donor-driven funding also narrows the NGO's goals to serve only one agenda or population.

Furthermore, women-led NGOs are expected to have higher transparency and accountability when compared to men counterparts. This is the second challenge faced by these leaders. The constant microscopic examination of the credibility of NGO leaders (Mitra, 2011) is indicative of the society's larger-than-life expectations of these leaders. The treatment of women leaders in professional circles varies greatly from men counterparts, where they are often subject to different and higher scrutiny. However, pre-existing social networks, including their financial status, at times allow them to circumnavigate some of the institutional and personal challenges.

The third challenge is the inherent patriarchal structure that allows for this scrutiny and disallows institutional access. This structure restricts a woman's agency over her education, body, career decisions, and financial freedom, among other dimensions. It also creates an insidious narrative wherein women marginalize other women's agency (Vasavada, 2012). The combination of these challenges thus creates hurdles that urban women leaders circumnavigate through their privileged existence. Rural women leaders in India are surrounded by some of the same challenges as their urban counterparts, but they also tend to lack education, opportunities,

and empowering attitudes. In this chapter, while we have largely focused on the urban narrative, the rural narrative is not far behind, having navigated these circumstances through sheer grit and determination. It is their collaboration with large developmental agencies and further exposure through international dialogue that allows them to manage some of the hurdles. However, these examples are few and far between with insidious corruption rotting the system (Vaidyanathan, 2011).

Conclusion

Indian NGO women leaders are dealing with both contradicting and enriching experiences in post-liberal India. Indian NGO work has actively empowered women leaders through opportunities to develop communities in myriad ways. This empowerment has led to breaking stereotypes and changing norms in significant developmental areas, such as access to networking channels that can get them the requisite funding, and in their personal lives, such as an accepting family; domestic help; and matured outlook of friends, family, and society at large. However, these strides are undergirded with continuous struggle to make space in inherent patriarchal structures. The glaring problem within both urban and rural India is its sexism and lack of gender parity, regardless of the sectors of employment. NGO leadership and entrepreneurship exacerbates this problem specifically because funding is limited and higher levels of accountability and transparency are expected from these women leaders when compared to men counterparts (Mitra, 2011). The challenge is further compounded as these women leaders are supposed to uphold the *nice* and *kind woman* stereotypes that may otherwise actively interfere with their working style and ability to delegate and lead organizations. These challenges give women NGO leaders a league of their own in which they must deal with challenging the stereotypes on one hand and finding path-breaking ways to work within the patriarchal structure on the other hand.

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13

Women Leaders in Indian Agriculture: Grassroots Perspective

Madhavi Mehta

I have brought about change in farming practices within my village. Instead of broadcasting of seeds, they now use line sowing or dibbling. This has resulted in higher yields for them. There are 150–175 farmers in my village, who now, on their own, practice this. (Asha Devi, personal communication, August 25, 2016)

—Asha Devi, a farmer and *Krishi Sakhi* [agriculture service provider] from Dausa, Rajasthan

Asha Devi, a young woman from rural Rajasthan, is the face of thousands of such women from the rural hinterlands of India who are the leaders in their villages, SHGs (self-help groups), SHG clusters, or federations. (An SHG is a group of 10–20 members—typically women from similar class and region, though there are mixed and all men SHGs also—for first six months, saving regularly and landing within the group, is subsequently

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linked with a bank for borrowing larger sums to facilitate livelihood enhancement. A village can have multiple SHGs and these SHGs (15–50) come together to form a cluster with one or two representatives from each SHG. Several clusters are federated into an SHG federation.) There are many such women playing influential roles in agriculture and allied activities in the village or a group of villages. Not all women in India are fully empowered to play leadership roles across many spheres. We applaud the leadership roles women are playing at the grassroots in agriculture and the factors that have facilitated the emergence of their leadership.

Though the prime focus of this chapter is cases of women leaders in agriculture, the theme of this chapter necessitated a review of the literature on a wide range of themes, including agriculture and agriculture value chains, women in agriculture and agriculture education, and leadership and gender. I began my search of current literature on databases such as EBSCO, JSTOR (Journal Storage), and Google Scholar and found the research-based literature available on the theme to be inadequate. I searched Google-generated government reports, statistical information, and studies and reports of Indian and international non-government development organizations (NGDOs) that are relevant for the chapter. The core of this chapter hinges largely on the primary data collected personally and through former students working in agriculture and related sectors located in different Indian states.

The chapter begins with an introduction to Indian agriculture and women in agriculture, followed by discussion of leadership, highlighting the Indian context of leadership and women in leadership. The next section focuses on women leaders in agriculture, based on an analysis of the cases and includes characteristics and styles of the leaders, their impact on the society and economy, and the challenges they face. The chapter ends with a conclusion and recommendations for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

Indian Agriculture and Women

Agriculture is a huge sector in India, ranking second in terms of production in the world, having over half of the nation's population dependent on it as a major source of income. It supports 17% of the world's

population, 15% of the world's livestock, and accounts for 14% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and 11% of its exports (Government of India [GoI], Ministry of Agriculture, 2012–2013). The sector includes horticulture, livestock, dairy, fisheries, agro-forestry, and agro-processing. Given this wide range of sub-sectors, it would be beyond the scope of the chapter to discuss specific roles women play in the value chains of each sub-sector.

Of the total working population in India, 87% are in villages; 97% of all the cultivators and 95% of all agriculture labor in India belong to rural areas (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, 2011). Furthermore, due to fragmentation of agriculture lands, agriculture in India is done by masses—mostly small and marginal farmers (less than or equal to two hectares of land).

This predominantly rural and family farming is also being feminized as is evident in the increasing number of women agriculture labor, moving from 25.6% in 1961 to 43.4% in 2001 as against “the increase from 16.2% to 27.4% for men over the same period” (Garikipati, 2008, p. 630). According to a more recent study (Mishra, 2016), 74% of India's rural women workforce is engaged in agriculture as against 59% of men's workforce; however, only 12.7% of rural women have operational land ownership, resulting in women working as unpaid subsistence labor on family farms or as paid labor. Thus, this feminization is primarily for agriculture labor, as landholding by women is significantly lower than that by men, as is the case with many of the developing countries of the world (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2016). The trend of feminization of agriculture labor is not likely to have changed much for India since the Census 2011 that found that the total number of women workers in rural India was 121.8 million, and 35.9 million women were working as cultivators, whereas 61.5 million were agricultural laborers (GoI, Ministry of Labour and Employment [MoLE], 2015). The same document also indicates that the work participation rate of women in rural areas has remained almost the same during the decade. It was 30.79% in 2001 and has marginally declined to 30.02% in 2011.

“Domestic work burden, lower mobility, lesser education and fewer investable assets” (Agarwal, 2002, p. 2) are some of the disadvantages that women have inherited from cultural tradition. These disadvantages, coupled with society's patriarchal nature, have led to societal norms

embracing negativities, such as lack of entitlements over productive assets (women not having legal ownership rights over any productive assets like land or cattle, in spite of legal provisions for such entitlements) and deeply entrenched societal norms have deprived women of these rights, leaving such women devoid of economic power and financial controls, making them perpetually dependent on men. These have prevented women for a long time from assuming leadership roles. Thus, although feminization of agriculture has ushered in the presence of many women, they still do not figure at the center of agriculture. Women's land rights are mostly neglected in policy and research, and positive changes in policies and legislation suffer from neglected implementation.

The Bodhgaya Movement of the late 1970s showcased how women were able to fight for land rights, how the largely illiterate peasant community discussed at length the wide range of women's issues, and how they reached agreement to have land titles in the names of women (Agarwal, 2002). The Bodhgaya Movement shows that the scenario has begun to change, albeit slowly, with efforts from multiple players, such as committed and enlightened functionaries of NGOs, active government agencies and their programs, and the courageous women farmers themselves.

Agriculture Education

Unlike agriculture in the Indian economy, agriculture education does not seem to enjoy a corresponding treatment, especially at the undergraduate level. Of 754 universities and 41,057 colleges and institutions that responded to a survey on the state of higher education, only 64 were agriculture and allied universities (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2015). Only 0.93% of all students enrolled were studying agriculture at the undergraduate level, and agriculture was among the three sectors having the lowest women's participation with 26.38% of all students enrolled in agriculture. Of all undergraduates, only 0.93% were in agriculture and allied sectors; however, the proportion rose multifold to 3.83% at the Ph.D. level. At the Ph.D. level, enrollment of women improves to 37.78% of all Ph.D. students in agriculture. Several reasons seem to be behind

this phenomenon, including agriculture being a second preference (only after medicine) for most women, jobs after graduation being predominantly field-based, and further higher education providing options of urban jobs, mostly in research and development, agri-financing, and academics. Despite increased enrolment at higher levels in agriculture education, the absolute enrolment of women in agriculture education has seen a marginal drop at the undergraduate level from 38.3% in 2013–2014 to 37.7% in 2015, as well as at the Ph.D. level, dropping from 27.4% in 2013–2014 to 26.38% in 2015–2016.

Agriculture Value Chain

A value chain is reflective of the complete range of activities required to produce and add value to a product or service, from its production to the final consumer. Agri-value chains are complex, and details of value chains are unique to their corresponding product or service. A typical generic agriculture value chain would include four major elements: inputs, production, processing, and marketing, each with its own sub-elements, as depicted in Fig. 13.1. If the large number of small and marginal farmers are included in the agri-value chains, social mobilization as a value chain enabler becomes critical. Social mobilization is a process of helping people learn to take charge of their lives. Women leaders in agriculture, as the cases in this chapter depict, play a very significant role in helping cultivators improve their socio-economic status through improved agricultural practices.

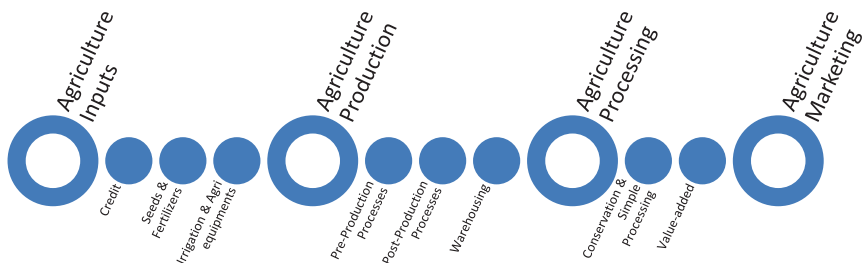


Fig. 13.1 Generic agriculture value chain

Women are found across value chains but predominantly in the pre-production, production, and post-harvesting stages, including social mobilization. Agricultural credit, from micro- to macro-levels, has seen a huge increase in participation of women through SHGs (self-help groups). According to the India Labour Yearbook (GoI, MoLE, 2015), 4.205 million SHGs have been formed with approximately 60% being women SHGs. These SHGs have emerged as informal yet highly effective sources of rural credit, a large share of which is used for agriculture and allied activities. SHG is a concept unique to India and a few South-East Asian countries. Of the 7.69 million SHGs that are linked with the NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development), 6.65 million are exclusively women's SHGs. Many NGOs, such as SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association), PRADAN (Professional Assistance for Development Action), SRIJAN (Self Reliant Initiatives Through Joint Action), and the like, are involved in social mobilization by organizing SHGs. Of these, SEWA caters exclusively to women. Members of these SHGs are happy to use their SHG collections (savings and loans) not only for buying agricultural inputs, such as seeds and fertilizers, but also in some cases for saving agricultural land from the clutches of money-lenders—small-time business people who meet urgent credit requirements of the rural population but who charge exorbitant interest, often taking agricultural land as collateral.

At a higher level, women have been playing an increasing role in the banking sector, thus, significantly influencing agri-credit policies of the banks. According to Bezbaruah (2015), 19.1% of total employees, 17.3% of managers, and 20.6% of clerical and subordinate staff in all banks within the country were women in the year 2013, which is a substantial increase from 13.6%, 6.3%, and 16.4%, respectively in 1996. In addition, prominent banks in India today are led by women leaders like Arundhati Bhattacharya (State Bank of India), Chanda Kochhar (ICICI Bank), and Shikha Sharma (Axis Bank).

Women are found in the production and basic post-production processing in large numbers in India. However, the society does not seem to recognize it. Sainath (2013), in his opinion piece, "When Leelabai runs the farm," captured the situation aptly. Leelabai, the wife of Ashanna, has become a symbol of success in agriculture in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. She said, "I am the farmer. He did no farming ... men hang

around the village, women are in the fields” (p. 1). She also candidly expressed who the real heroes (heroines?) of Indian agriculture are: “when it came to who really did the farming, ‘*Bai* (women),’” she said. “And they do it better” (Sainath, 2013, p. 1). The findings of the National Sample Survey Organization seem to suggest that sowing, transplanting, and weeding were the operations in which over a third of those involved were women, and more than 50% of those engaged in animal husbandry were women (Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010).

Baliyan (2014), in a study in western Uttar Pradesh, found that the pre-production task of weeding is carried out exclusively by women (weeding is the most tiresome of the agricultural operations), whereas activities related to land preparation, irrigation, and spraying fertilizer and pesticide are generally done by men. Some of the farming operations are performed jointly, like seed collection, spraying organic pesticide made with cow dung and other ingredients, sowing, transplanting, harvesting, threshing, and carrying the grains home. However, all market-related tasks are done by men, including decisions on purchase of agricultural inputs, labor requirements, and selling of the output. Simple processing is women’s responsibility, such as cleaning and storage of grains. Thus, clearly, women perform more backbreaking tasks in agricultural operations, whereas those requiring the use of machines and those pertaining to financial decision-making are predominantly carried out by men.

According to an analysis (Mishra, 2016) of women’s involvement in agriculture, only 12.69% of rural women have operational ownership. Thus, men are mostly the legal owners of family property, including agricultural land. Most women in agriculture do not have ownership of productive agriculture resources. The cases studied for this chapter corroborate this. The concept of the head of the household and the patrilineal society often result in women being deprived of ownership of productive assets; they often end up as workers on family farms. Only 2 of the 30 women leaders studied had land registered in their name. Incidentally, both are widowed and from the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Even the government recognizes this, and MKSP (*Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana*—a scheme of GoI for empowering women farmers), with substantial focus on skills and capabilities enhancement, is an effort in this direction to recognize the wife of a farmer who works on the farm as a farmer.

Women's Leadership in Indian Agriculture

Leadership in agriculture at the grassroots is somewhat different as compared to corporate organizational contexts. In organizations, top leadership is mostly highly educated with a high net worth, known by a large number of people outside the organization, and having a wider circle of influence. In the case of agriculture, we do have such leaders as Dr. M. S. Swaminathan (a geneticist known as the father of the green revolution in India), Dr. Verghese Kurien (the man behind the world's largest agricultural dairy development program), Dr. (Ms.) Amrita Patel (who led the largest dairy development program under the aegis of the National Dairy Development Board—NDDB, after Dr. Kurien), Ms. Mallika Srinivasan (Chair and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tractor and Farm Equipment—TAFE, also known as the Tractor Queen of India), agriculture activists like Sir Chhotu Ram, N. G. Ranga, Mahendra Singh Tikait, Sharad Joshi, Ms. Vandana Shiva (environmental activist with an extensive focus on advances in agriculture and food), and Ms. Suman Sahai (academician and activist working on policy issues related to genetically modified organisms). Clearly, men dominate; the number of women is very few. The agriculture leadership awards in 2016 further reiterates this. Of the eight awards in the individual category, seven were conferred upon men. The sole woman recipient was in the category of women's leadership award (9th Agriculture Leadership Summit, 2016). While the agriculture sector needs leaders and women leaders at every point in the value chain and in policymaking, research, and education, the focus in this chapter is on the everyday leaders at the grassroots level affecting everyday agriculture practices and production.

In order to explore women's leadership in agriculture at the grassroots level, 14 primary¹ case studies were conducted and 15 secondary ones were analyzed. The findings presented below are based on this exploratory analysis. It is encouraging to note that about a third of the case studies are from Rajasthan—culturally rich but ill-reputed from a gender perspective owing to its sex ratio unfavorable to women, prevalent practice of child marriage, and atrocities against women. The women leaders whose accounts are analyzed and reported here are from Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat,

Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, ensuring regional representation except for the northern region where women's participation in agriculture is very low.

A typical woman leader described here is in the age group of 30–40 years, having primary schooling, belonging to a small or marginal farmer family, actively associated with a village-based group (SHG/Thrift Group), married, and with children who are studying and doing well. Most of the cases studied are of women who hold leadership positions in an SHG, an SHG cluster or federation, a dairy cooperative society (DCS), and so on. The age of the women is younger than women in many developing countries as, owing to the feminization of agriculture, more and more younger women are forced to enter agriculture as men in families migrate to urban areas in search of better livelihood options.

Leadership Characteristics and Style

The most common characteristic found across all cases was role modeling or leading by good example. A meta-analysis of the literature on leadership by Winston and Patterson (2006) lists “is an example” as a leadership dimension and cites several terms/phrases, such as “is a model for followers,” “be an example,” “a model,” “show/model the way,” “provide role model,” and so on (p. 51). All leaders studied also practiced what they attempted to change in other farmers. Asha Devi, the *Krisshi Sakhi*, replaced the broadcasting method of sowing with line sowing, before she could convince other women farmers in her farming school to do so. What was started by one woman in 2012 has led to over half the village adopting it within three cropping seasons. Some women leaders did not even initiate a change with an intention to lead; instead, success of their action inspired others. Santhi, from rural Tamil Nadu, took charge of the ancestral land after her husband's death. Having a keen interest in sustainable agriculture, she practiced it diligently by not removing shrubs from sugarcane crops (good for weed control and retaining crop moisture) and by applying fertilizer through drip irrigation. These practices have not only made her farming operations efficient, but have also made her the farmers' leader in her area. Both men and women have adopted these practices and seek her guidance.

Experimentation indicates the ability to try out new ways of dealing with problems. It also has an element of risk involved. The meta-analysis by Winston and Patterson (2006) identified risk-taking as a dimension of leadership and included phrases such as “ability to take risks,” “risk taker,” and “experiments and takes risks” (p. 45). The cases also indicate the presence of risk-taking in these leaders across the states studied. Kajori Devi (SRIJAN, 2015) from Rajasthan invested all her SHG savings in purchasing a buffalo, whereas Kamala Sakia (PRADAN, 2011) from Odisha using integrated natural resource management switched to horticulture from traditional cereal cultivation. Sagunthala from Tamil Nadu is another example. The 11 acres of semi-arid family farm had become almost fallow, covered by thorny bushes. With relentless hard work, she restored the land and took to organic farming. With this experience and success in her armory, she has become a great source of inspiration to the farmers in her village. Panchi Devi (Centre for microFinance [CMF]—Rajasthan, 2013), an uneducated woman from Rajasthan who grazed cattle for her family as a young girl, has today become a savior of the village livestock by becoming the *Pashu Sakhi* [Livestock Service Provider]. She has given new lives to about 5000 livestock by providing them good and timely treatment. She has also organized four SHGs that help the members in managing their savings and three cattle rearers’ groups that help the members deal with their cattle-related issues.

All of these leaders studied came across as authentic individuals. Practice before you preach and leading by example are evidence of their authenticity. “An authentic person is genuine and does not feign qualities ... he/she does not possess” (Zhu, May, & Avolio, 2004, p. 21). Winston and Patterson (2006) listed authentic as one of the over 90 leadership dimensions they found in their meta-analysis. Many of these women have also had a troubled past. Chintabai from Dewas in Madhya Pradesh is today known as the founder director of Ram Rahim Pragati Producers’ Company Ltd. (RRPPCL). She was born to a bonded farm worker and married to an alcoholic, a debt-bonded farm laborer. Lakshminarasamma, today on the Board of Directors of Dharani Fam Cooperative Ltd., in Andhra Pradesh, was forced to take over the leadership of the thrift group led by her mother upon her sudden demise. Savitaben (NDDDB, 2016), the chair of a DCS in Gujarat today, belongs to a tribal family of five that

lived in abject poverty, with a small unproductive piece of land, was forced to migrate seasonally to make ends meet. These life stories of misery and pain that these women have lived can be seen as crucibles of leadership (Bennis & Thomas, 2002) and possibly the reason for their commitment to the agricultural sector.

Knowledge had been identified as an important leadership dimension (Winston & Patterson, 2006). They cited several aspects related to learning, such as, “learns fast,” “learns from failures,” “learns unceasingly,” and “seeks opportunities to learn.” Lifelong learning, a strong desire to learn and continue learning, occurs commonly across the women under study. Anita Kumari (NDDDB, 2016) from Jharkhand (an Indian state that, though rich in mineral resources, suffers widespread poverty) is an AI (artificial insemination) technician. She went to Andhra Pradesh where she completed 90 days of classroom training and 30 days of practical training on AI when many other participants discontinued the training. She also associated with veterinary doctors and, due to her keen interest, explored the problems of infertility in milch animals (a domestic animal yielding milk). She developed a level of expertise to such an extent that, even today, farmers trust her advice, even though she underwent AI training back in 1988. She also acquired skills in poultry farming and started her own small poultry farm in 1990. She went on to become the secretary of a DCS in her village.

All of the women attributed learning as a first step that took them to leadership positions. Most have only undergone primary school education; some never even went to school, few of them had secondary or higher education, or some who were relatively highly educated in their village, like Meera from Rajasthan (the only literate woman in her village when they were forming an SHG). It was their assumption that they would not be heard as they were not men and were not educated. In some cases, they were opposed by men members in the family like Suvarnamma from Andhra Pradesh recounted the criticism she faced from her husband on participating in any discussion: “You don’t know how the world operates, so it’s better you don’t involve (yourself).” This realization about the need to learn and the humiliating life experiences inspired them to acquire in-depth knowledge and then apply that knowledge to influence agricultural practices of others, including their immediate family. All of

these women learned about their work, acquired knowledge through formal training, and associated themselves with learned people, and they are now leading various entities. For instance, Meera is a member of the governing board of an SHG Federation in Rajasthan and an effective *Pashu Sakhi*. Anjanamma is a member of the Board of Directors of Dharani FaM Cooperative Ltd. and has been successfully promoting organic farming. Manju Jakhar, an elected director on the board of Paayas Milk Producers' Company Ltd., and a recipient of the Dairy Woman of the Year 2016 award, is another example of how these women continue to learn. A company official recounted:

Manju ma'am did not speak much during the first three meetings of the board, but, after attending a directors' workshop, she started coming to the company office early on the days of board meetings ... would read the agenda papers ... would clarify things by consulting with me ... understand the process of decision making.

Today, Suvarnamma's husband consults her before taking any decision and Manju is competent to lead the board meetings of the company.

All of these women have been early adopters of improved agricultural and allied practices be it line sowing, organic farming, regular savings through SHGs, or using AI for their cows. Karuna Patra (NDDDB, n.d.) in West Bengal was the first and only member to pour milk (regularly selling small amounts of milk to the procurement center) the day the DCS opened in her village on February 12, 2014. She not only continued to pour milk but also played a key role in organizing the dairy farmers in her village. Chintabai of RRPPCL was the first woman to sign up for the SHG being set up by an NGDO.

Courageous is also an adjective that describes these women, given the social context of strong patriarchy and the prevalent practice of confining women to the four walls of their home. Radha (CMF—Rajasthan, 2013) from Rajasthan showed courage in becoming a member of an SHG in her village against the wishes of her parents-in-law and eventually went on to become the *Pashu Sakhi* for the village. However, the villagers did not accept her initially as a *Pashu Sakhi*. Only after she applied her knowledge for treating her livestock and succeeding did the villagers began accepting her in the new role and started following her advice.

Traveling to a nearby town or the district headquarters may seem like an everyday act for many city-dwelling women, but it takes a lot of courage for the village women just about anywhere in India. When cattle breeding was assumed to be a highly technical job and not deemed suitable for women (Ghokhale & Karmarkar, 2016), women AI technicians operating in the villages of Rajasthan and Jharkhand successfully executed their roles, which is a testimony to their courage and competence.

Another important feature that the cases reveal is that money matters. Most of these women have been SHG or Thrift Group members and began their leadership journey, albeit unknowingly, by saving small sums of money regularly. There are plenty of examples of how these small sums saved regularly by women have come to the rescue of families while buying agricultural inputs/cattle or support children's education. Manbhar Devi (CMF—Rajasthan, 2013), a member of an SHG in Rajasthan, used her savings to dig a bore-well for irrigating her otherwise rain-fed family farm.

Perseverance and resilience are two other highly related qualities to be found in abundance in these women. Asha Devi vividly described her first day as *Krishti Sakhi* when she was at her agri-school explaining the benefits of line sowing and the need to replace broadcasting with line sowing. The response was dampening. She was told, "You keep your ways to yourself." She patiently explained it again to the women farmers attending farming school, but to no effect. She refused to give up. With repeated attempts, she managed to convince a few of the women farmers to try it on a portion of their family farm. With positive results, lesser investments, and higher returns achieved, the number of farmers willing to try it multiplied. Nirma Devi, another *Krishti Sakhi* from Rajasthan, has been a member and president of an SHG since 2013. For her, the challenges arose on the home front. Her husband did not agree with her going out to hold farming school and expected her to be in *Ghoonghat* [loose end of a *sari* pulled over the head and face to work as a veil]. Furthermore, the challenge of convincing the women farmers was the same as that faced by Asha Devi. Villagers raised questions about women traveling to other places. With perseverance and support from other women members of the SHGs, they overcame these challenges emanating from the home front, from other farmers, and from the villagers.

Unlike men, these women do not exhibit their power by attempting to dominate. Instead, they use a people-oriented leadership style as expressed by Lakshminarasamma of Andhra Pradesh. Listening to people and understanding their concerns is her people-oriented style. This style helps them deal with farmers with patience, while influencing their agricultural practices. As most have been part of a collective (SHG or thrift group), they hold a participatory leadership style that they perceive to be the most crucial for their success. SHGs are small units owned and managed by the community with a high degree of decentralization (Sarma & Mehta, 2014), necessitating a high degree of member participation.

As Suvarnamma put it, “striking a balance between farmers’ interests (greater returns for their produce) and that of the consumers (greater value for money)” becomes quite a challenge.

Even with this high people orientation, as it is not the country club kind of leadership style that they exhibit, the task at hand is equally crucial. Thus, the cases studied indicate that the leadership style of these women can be characterized by feminine values of leadership (Vasavada, 2012), as briefly described below:

An ethic of care and nurturance—characterized by behaviours such as supporting and soothing others ... sensitive, emotional....

Informal interpersonal communication—including open door policy, interpersonal approach ... team centred approach, prefer frequent contact and information sharing.

A participative leadership style—described as interpersonally oriented, more democratic tendencies ... ability to listen, empowerment oriented. (p. 473)

Impact of Women’s Leadership in Indian Agriculture

These women are impacting the rural society and economy. One very obvious and tangible impact for the leaders and farmers who followed them is increased production and efficient use of inputs. Saved livestock, better progeny, and improved quality of produce are other benefits.

In a social context where going out of the confines of home was unimaginable, when women go to a bank, interact with the officials, and

operate a bank account, it is a fundamental change in the lives of village women. Rajamoni (NDDDB, n.d.) from Karnataka could not study due to poverty and had to graze cattle instead. She became a member of an SHG in which she saved and was able to purchase cattle. With earnings from the cattle milk, she multiplied her cattle such that she could sponsor her daughter's education by selling two of her cows. All the women leaders studied have narrated how their being active in agriculture has been financially empowering and how they used the savings to finance their children's education. My interaction with some women dairy farmers in Rajasthan also corroborated this. Thus, financial empowerment of the women resulted in increased purchasing power that has led to better education of the next generation and improved agricultural productivity and production.

These women have catalyzed social change. In a society where gendered division of labor is the norm, husbands have begun sharing household chores, inspiring change at the village level, and accepting not only women's critical role in agriculture, but also their superiority in many sub-sectors. Many women farmers studied have narrated how their spouses inquire about training at the farming school and have left the tasks of purchasing inputs to the women. Women like Manju (Rajasthan) and Rajamoni (Karnataka) have inspired their husbands to take up dairying and give up their petty jobs. These women are an inspiration not just for other women, but also for men and the next generation. When Asha Devi's school-going daughter attends the SHG meeting with her and helps her with the minutes of the meeting and books of accounts, it is definitely inspiring her. This is heralding a slow but steady social change that is around the corner.

Having been members of SHGs and other collectives has also given women the courage to identify village-level concerns and raise their voice about them. Meera Devi and her group, in one meeting, discussed the issue of new railway tracks being laid in their village and associated problems. They also arrived at an alternative and have begun a signature campaign to escalate the issue. This shows the strength of the collective that many of these women's SHGs are leveraging for a variety of social issues, be it alcoholism, quality of public services, or atrocities against women.

Challenges Faced by Indian Women in Agricultural Leadership

Gender-specific challenges faced by these women are typical, including those related to personal inadequacy, conflicts emanating from inter-role distance (role conflicts experienced by these women leaders owing to the multiplicity of roles they perform that are often at conflict with each other, e.g., the demands of reproductive roles downplaying their productive roles), and gender stereotypes. Being illiterate or inadequately educated is a personal inadequacy that many of the leaders studied admitted. While many have been able to acquire agricultural knowledge, further education and financial literacy in some cases are still challenges to be addressed. Striking a balance between their twin roles of homemakers and agriculture leaders is a challenge that many of the women studied have been able to overcome successfully and now have their husbands by their side sharing the homemaker role. Paravativalli of Karnataka shared the challenge of being the only woman farmer from her community, whereas many women farmers from Rajasthan recollected the lewd comments they faced when they began their journey of leadership. While most of the women have managed to deal with these challenges, the current challenges they face are largely related to the business of agriculture: ensuring participation of all farmer members in decision-making, dealing with fluctuating prices of agriculture produce, dealing with political pressures as political groups view them as a threat or wanting to leverage their popularity for their political gains, and internal power politics within the collectives they lead. The younger generation's apathy toward farming is a challenge that India as a country stares at, and the elderly women leaders are able to sense. The changing nature of challenges these women face is evidence of their growth as leaders who are not merely figureheads but who mean business.

What emerges as a facilitating factor in the majority of the case studies is the support provided by promoting NGDOs. This has come in the form of inculcating savings habits, identification of women with leadership potential, technical and leadership training, and opportunities to exercise leadership.

Recommendations

As the available literature indicates, feminization of Indian agriculture is here to stay. The deepening agrarian crisis is due to the plummeting agricultural growth rate, leading to farmer suicide, coupled with poor non-farm livelihood opportunities, forcing out-migration of men to urban areas. The need for India is to design policies and encourage practices that rest on this reality of Indian agriculture. This section offers recommendations for practice, for policymakers, and for researchers.

Recommendations for Practice

The leadership enablers described above need to be taken up by practitioners to improve women's leadership. The current crisis of pulses (a basic food in India) is due to reduction by about 50% in the net availability in the last 60 years from 1951 to 2011 (Reddy & Reddy, 2010), while at the same time there has been an increase in demand owing to a population increase of over 335% (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2011) during the same period. This is another challenge that Indian agriculture is facing. This crisis can plausibly be overcome if women who have begun to play vital roles in sustainable agriculture are trained in conserving and replicating local varieties of pulses.

Beyond this issue, agriculture in India is facing a crisis in the decline of the number of people focused on production of agricultural goods. As agriculture has been feminized in India, the focus of agricultural education must be more broadly focused on women. Given the low level of education of women in agriculture, school curricula should focus more on agriculture, including both primary and secondary education. More training workshops are needed across India to meet the needs of women in agriculture. Because of the significant role of SHGs in developing women leaders in agriculture, more effort is needed to build and expand SHGs, including the preparation of women for leadership of SHGs.

Future Research

This exploratory analysis was motivated by the fact that Indian agriculture is essentially agriculture by the masses. If farmers' interests are prioritized, any such study or efforts of strengthening agriculture need to focus at the grassroots levels and the production side of agriculture. As this chapter is an exploratory study, further systematic research needs to be conducted to understand women's leadership in agriculture at different levels to ascertain if there is a distinct feminine leadership style in the agriculture sector and to assess if a stereotypic masculine, feminine, or androgynous leadership style is more effective in agriculture. Studies with specific focus on women in agriculture value chains that can identify factors to strengthen the women farmers, as well as the value chains, are urgently required owing to the larger agrarian crisis and feminization of agriculture in India.

Because this chapter focused only on the production side of agriculture, there is a need for a similar study of women who are employed in agri-business, including food processing, distribution, and marketing of agri-produce. While women do not yet have the impact in these processes, compared with the production processes, there is greater financial potential in the agri-business arena.

Researchers in human resource development (HRD) need to focus not only on developing tools for systematically assessing leadership potential among women in agriculture at different levels, but also on identifying/developing tools, techniques, and processes that are appropriate for developing leadership in women.

Recommendations to Policymakers

While there have been numerous government policies both for strengthening Indian agriculture and enhancing leadership in women, the current requirement is that policymakers come up with implementation mechanisms for ensuring that land rights for women materialize into reality and that other policies already in place are enforced.

Conclusion

These women leaders have exhibited characteristics and styles that are plausibly unique to women. Though they started with gender stereotypical challenges, the current challenges for the existing leaders relate to the business of agriculture. Active support from NGOs for their identification, training, encouragement, and membership in collectives and support from fellow members have been major facilitating factors besides their own courage and self-confidence. The women leaders that the chapter discusses are few and far between. The need is continuously to keep creating such leaders in large numbers.

Note

1. I thank my former students Dharanendran, Malika, Sathish, Smriti, Vaibhav, Vishnu, and employees of Centre for microFinance—Jaipur, Paayam Milk Producers' Company Ltd. Jaipur and SRIJAN—Tonk for the case studies/facilitating my interaction with some of the remarkable women leaders that they work with.

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Part IV

International Perspectives

In this part, a comparative presentation is provided to understand the challenges and opportunities facing women leaders in India compared to those in other Asian countries.



14

Indian Women in Leadership in an Asian Context

Sanghamitra Chaudhuri, Sunyoung Park,
and Gertrude I. Hewapathirana

Breaking through the glass ceiling by navigating successfully through the leadership labyrinth, Asian women are gradually climbing the ladder in all spheres, ranging from business to politics. The journey has been challenging but phenomenal, given the jarring backdrop. While research on women leaders is burgeoning in western contexts, not much has been discussed about women leaders in Indian or Asian contexts. However, in the past few years, researchers who have taken a keen interest in women leaders from an Asian perspective have reported that women talents are underutilized due to gender bias and social, cultural, and organizational practices. These are critical issues that hinder

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national competitiveness and economic and social advancement of women in Asian countries (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat et al., 2015; Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002; Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi, & Malone, 2004). Though Asian women are increasingly found in higher education and lower level staff and managerial positions in business, there are only a handful of women holding top leadership positions in organizations in Asian countries. According to Süßmuth-Dyckerhoff, Wang, and Chen (2012), women have 6% to 8% of the leadership roles in Asia compared to 14% to 15% in the west. These numbers paint a dismal picture at both local and global levels. This is particularly true for Indian women who are still oppressed by the patriarchy that still dominates Indian society and where discrimination against women leaders continues (Mukherjee, 2016).

Based on the significant social and cultural variability with respect to women's leadership and familiarity, the Asian countries we have included for comparison purposes are China, South Korea (Korea hereafter), Sri Lanka, and Malaysia. While Indian, Chinese, and Korean women have 3.3%, 3.2%, and 3.5% chance of rising to top leadership (Credit Suisse Research Institute, 2014), the ratio is marginally higher for Sri Lankan and Malaysian women leaders at 5.1% and 5.6% (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat et al., 2015). This is a clear indication that Asian women leaders still face severe barriers in reaching their full potential in highly male-dominant social, cultural, and organizational environments. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the barriers and success drivers of women leaders in organizational settings in India and how they compare against the women leaders in other Asian countries. In this pursuit, we identify the differences and similarities of challenges and opportunities experienced by women leaders in India and four Asian countries based on gender stereotypes, culture, organizational practices, family commitment, and emphasis on women's education. This research will add to the growing pool of cross-cultural leadership, especially from an Asian woman's leadership perspective. We also believe that this chapter is one of the first to preview the macro-environmental factors impacting women's leadership from a multi-country perspective in an Asian context.

A Comparison of Barriers to Advancement of Women in India and Asian Countries

Gender inequality continues to be pervasive not only in Asia but across the world in multiple domains, including retention, recruitment, and career development (Tatli, Vassilopoulou, & Özbilgin, 2013). Women employees have suffered from such inequalities; thus, their potential has remained largely untapped. In the following section, we review key themes that have stifled women's career progression in Asia and compare them with those found in India.

Gender Development Index and Gender Stereotypes

Before embarking on a discussion of gender stereotyping, we explore ranks on the gender development index (GDI) of each country. GDI is the human development index (HDI) that measures gender equality and exposes gender gap issues. HDI measures three areas: life expectancy, education, and standard of living. With the same areas in the HDI, the GDI is the ratio of HDIs calculated separately for women and men. In other words, the GDI is a direct measure of gender gap showing women's HDI as a percentage of men's HDI (or a ratio of women's HDI to men's HDI) (UNDP, 2016). The GDI shows how much women are lagging behind their male counterparts and how much women need to catch up on human development (UNDP, 2016). Therefore, a higher GDI value conveys less of a gender gap between women and men in human development.

Korean women fare much better in HDI compared to their Asian counterparts, standing at 18th of 188 countries, followed by Malaysia at 59th, and Sri Lanka at 73rd (UNDP, 2016). The two most populous countries in the world are lagging behind at 90th for China and 131st for India. In terms of GDI, however, China showed the highest value (0.954), followed by Sri Lanka (0.934), Korea (0.929), and India (0.819). Thus, the GDI group rank of China is the highest (Group 2), which comprises countries with medium to high equality in HDI achievements between women and men (absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values of 2.5%–5%) among other countries. Table 14.1 summarizes the HDI and GDI of the five countries (UNDP, 2016).

Table 14.1 Comparison of gender development indexes

HDI rank	Country	Gender development index		Human development index (HDI)		Life expectancy at birth		Expected years of schooling		Mean years of schooling		Estimate gross national income per capita	
		Value	Group	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
18	Korea	0.929	3	0.863	0.929	85.2	78.8	15.8	17.3	11.5	12.9	21,308	47,934
59	Malaysia	NA	NA	NA	NA	77.3	72.6	NA	NA	10.0	10.8	17,170	32,208
73	Sri Lanka	0.934	3	0.734	0.785	78.4	71.7	14.3	13.6	10.3	11.4	6067	15,869
90	China	0.954	2	0.718	0.753	77.5	74.5	13.7	13.4	7.2	7.9	10,705	15,830
131	India	0.819	5	0.549	0.671	69.9	66.9	11.9	11.3	4.8	8.2	2,184	8897

In India and China, religion or rigid schools of thought have played a pivotal role in women's status. *Rigveda*, one of the ancient Indian sacred texts of Hinduism, viewed women as shakti (epitome of power and potent), devi (goddess), or the supreme Goddess, without whom men remain powerless (Tewari & Tewari, 2017). However, sadly, the godly status of women took a reverse turn in the Medieval era that witnessed many Muslim invaders who carried their own culture to Indian soil. Their marginalized thinking in regards to women's place in society affected the Indian mindset. Furthermore, as Indian men wanted to protect their women from the Muslim invaders, they restricted Indian women to the confinement of homes and under veils to cover them from head to toe (Tewari & Tewari, 2017). As a consequence, the overall status of Indian women started deteriorating, and they were restricted to childrearing and domestic chores (Budhwar, Saini, & Bhatnagar, 2005; Tewari & Tewari, 2017). Likewise, in China, traditional culture negatively affects women. Based on Confucianism, men and women have adopted stereotypical roles to be socially accepted. Men are more likely to engage in behaviors that emphasize the masculine aspects of being in-charge, such as dominance, aggression, and achievement. In contrast, women are more likely to display feminine behaviors that emphasize affiliation, nurturing, deference, and abasement, traits traditionally associated with supporter or follower roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Furst & Reeves, 2008).

Unlike India and China, Korea has a higher GDI rank in spite of the influence of Confucianism and a male-dominant society. The higher GDI rank can be explained, in part, because of the rapid industrialization in Korea compared to its Asian neighbors. Despite its higher GDI, women still remain longer in lower ranks in organizations than men, even though they have the same level of education (Gress & Paek, 2014; Kim & Rowley, 2009). This reflects a discriminant norm for gender in Korea. Defiance and resistance are regarded as manly attitudes that are less allowable for women. Recently, Korean women leaders represent diverse roles in organizations, overcoming gender stereotypes to some degree.

It is encouraging to see better GDIs for Sri Lanka and Malaysia, as well. Both countries have witnessed powerful women leaders who helped their countries rise to prominence by steering past gender stereotypes. However, there is certainly more than that, as India also had the privilege

of having women as Prime Minister and President, but India's GDI is not as promising as in these two countries. Why this is so is not entirely clear. There have been massive social changes and cultural reforms in Sri Lanka and Malaysia (Stivens, 2003). Social transformation in both countries has led to embracing a modern outlook and extensive involvement of women in work, which possibly explains their higher GDIs (Stivens, 2003). However, Indian society is still burdened by stereotypical gendered roles where access to education is considered men's right, and women's education is often considered a waste of resources, as women will ultimately get married and move into a different household, and engage in domestic chores and childcare. Educating her is still perceived to have little relevance to her future roles (Duflo, 2012).

Cultural Context

Each country's culture has played a significant role in influencing leadership behaviors, practices, and styles (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2001). The impact is more obvious in Asian society where roles are clearly gendered because of adherence to deeply entrenched cultural beliefs. Literature reveals that countries with strong Confucianism orientation (China and Korea) or Islamic ideology (Malaysia) emphasize men over women and do not wholeheartedly embrace the notion of women holding jobs that would give them more economic independence and power and prestige over men (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat et al., 2015). Similarly, Hinduism, which largely manifests itself as a male-dominant religion (in spite of its many women goddesses), too, has fueled a sense of powerlessness and dependence in the minds of Indian women. Interestingly, the difference is more pronounced in case of lower caste women and women from not-so-affluent families. Likewise, in Sri Lanka, Islamic and Buddhist religious ideologies keep women as subordinates to men, and women are perceived to be home keepers rather than leaders in society (Fernando & Cohen, 2011).

Literature provides many examples from these five countries that reflect the ideology of their staunch masculine cultures and their impact on women. In India, leadership roles requiring critical decision-making and challenging assignments are still reserved for male employees under

the pretext that Indian women are too soft to take up such responsibilities (Kulkarni & Bakhare, 2011). In a similar vein, jobs with long hours and late night work are seen as unsuitable for young women in Sri Lanka (Fernando, 2012). Continuing with this theme, Chinese women are subservient to the family patriarch and play a secondary role in the public sphere with low status in society (Peng, Ngo, Shi, & Wong, 2009). In Malaysia, cultural norms and religious ideologies still prevent women from engaging in top leadership positions (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat et al., 2015). Korean women leaders are trying to navigate through the leadership labyrinth by following the rules of men, meeting expectations of organizations by over-performing, participating in long work hours, and joining in drinking and eating with their colleagues after work. But they had to develop their own leadership styles to survive in the male-dominant organizations (Oh & Park, 2012; Park, 2011). However, this ordeal has left them psychologically and emotionally confused and frustrated, which makes their roles more complex (Kang & Rowley, 2005; Lee & Kim, 2007).

Family Commitment

Asia is known for its collectivistic culture (Du & Jonas, 2015). Embedded in such cultures are profound commitment to family ties and family values, the onus of which mostly falls upon women. It was intriguing to observe a common thread that Asian women are tasked with taking care of their families and children, maintenance of their houses, and the upbringing (especially education) of their children, on top of maintaining their own career at work (Peus, Braun, & Knipfer, 2015).

Women in India have been subjected to multitasking and the double-blind of domestically being the epitome of sacrifice, as daughter, sister, mother, or wife; while professionally being expected to be as committed to their work as their male counterparts. Tandon, Kohli, and Bhalla (2007) conducted a survey of 1063 women leaders in dental colleges in India; 64% reported that family commitments are a hindrance for them to move up their career ladder. Similarly, Chinese women, much like Indian women, are socialized to embrace family priorities over personal aspirations and are expected to sacrifice their careers to propel their husbands'

careers (Cooke & Xiao, 2014). Sri Lankan women, due to prevailing social and cultural values, prefer to resign early in their careers to care for family matters and children's upbringing (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat et al., 2015). Malaysia, too, despite being a progressive economy, does not paint an optimistic picture. Due to their higher level of family commitments, despite equal talent and educational qualifications, Malaysian women choose not to apply for senior management positions as they believe that it is too difficult to balance work and family (Azwan & Kamaruzaman, 2009).

Much like India and China, Korean women's underrepresentation in leadership positions is partially due to the dual roles undertaken by working women: one in the workplace and the other in managing the household (Low, Roberts, & Whiting, 2015). In fact, in Korea, women are blamed if their children's academic performance drops (Rowley, Kang, & Lim, 2016).

Organization Practices

The ideology of Schein's (1973) *think manager; think male* spans across almost all organizations in the Asian countries under review, and this paradigm is widely reflected in their organizational practices that are not conducive to the benefit of women employees. In India, there are considerable barriers in many professions in which women are being discriminated and are not being promoted because of discriminatory promotion criteria. The discriminatory practices continue even after a women leader has been promoted to a higher level as the compensation is often lower than their male counterparts in a similar role (Jain & Mukherji, 2010). In a similar vein, legislation that protects women's rights has been weakly enforced in Chinese organizations (Cooke, 2011), resulting in gender discrimination whereby women are being assigned less-challenging careers compared to men (Peng et al., 2009). This has resulted in reduced organizational commitment for working women forcing them to return home, take on traditional gender roles, and leave the public sphere to men (Currier, 2007).

While unfair organizational practices are one of the deterrents for women to enter leadership roles in India and China, managerial stereotypes have become major constraints for women to rise in top managerial positions in Sri Lanka and Malaysia (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat et al., 2015; Powell

et al., 2002). In Sri Lanka, leadership in organizations has been perceived as a masculine concept (Binns, 2010). Women who display masculine natures have a better chance to be promoted as managers (Fernando, 2012). In Korea, the proportion of women in the workforce is much higher in lower ranked positions, decreasing as women go up through the organizational hierarchy (Heidrick & Struggles, 2013). Korean women are coaxed or, in some cases, forced to resign if they marry or become pregnant (Cooke, 2010). Additionally, most of these Asian organizations lack women-friendly work systems and facilities, such as daycare centers, flexible work hours, and leadership training centers, hindering women who wish to advance in their careers (Azwan & Kamaruzaman, 2009).

Drivers Contributing to Women's Leadership in Asian Countries

Despite these barriers, it appears that consensus on the participation of Asian women in leadership is on the rise. Many Asian organizations are designing women-friendly work environments to encourage women participation in workplaces. In the education sector, many policies are being proposed that promote more women receiving higher education. The subsequent section highlights the changing landscape of Asian workplaces and cultural and mental shifts in the mindset of Asians in general.

Progressive Practices and Trends

Increasing awareness of creating more women leaders in Asia and in Asian organizations is making slow but steady progress in addressing barriers related to the glass ceiling. One such factor is the increasing number of women-friendly workplaces. Increased access to organization-sponsored childcare facilities, flexi hours, job redesign, quota systems, more gender-neutral organizational practices in promotion, and the opening up of service sectors, such as call centers, have resulted in entry and retention of more women employees, thus feeding the pipeline for more women in supervisory and management positions. We suggest examples of specific practices from each country.

The burgeoning of information technology (IT) and financial sectors has opened up a whole gamut of opportunities for Indian women. A few organizations are offering job redesign and stretching their boundaries between work and home by offering 60-hour work weeks in which dual earner couples can share 60 hours of work in one week (Hill, Yang, Hawkins, & Ferris, 2004; Munn & Chaudhuri, 2015). Of course, this assumes that the couple has similar qualifications in education, career, and expertise. While Indian organizations are providing work-friendly policies to promote women leaders, China has a network of childcare provision that can be sourced from (state) employers, local communities, family networks, or private paid assistance (Zhao, Hämäläinen, & Chen, 2017). Korean women leaders have taken the onus of raising next generation women leaders by being the role models and mentors so that they can share their unique experiences in grooming future women leaders (Cho, Kim, et al., 2015). Based on the study of very successful 18 women leaders in Korea, Cho and colleagues (2015) reported that grandparents, live-in nannies, and relatives are playing a pivotal role in taking care of the kids during week days so that women leaders can work long hours and excel in what they are doing.

At the national level, to promote women's leadership, the Indian government has adopted a quota system whereby one-third of the seats at every level of the local government, lower house of the parliament, and all state legislative assemblies are reserved for women leaders to voice their opinions and concerns. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) mandates that all major listed companies have at least one woman director (Pathak & Purkayastha, 2016). Initiatives like these have not only helped in changing the general mindset of the Indian masses that women can lead, but also resulted in significant policy changes and increased women's participation at the regional and national level (Pande & Ford, 2011). On the contrary, women in Sri Lanka and Malaysia have displayed tremendous potential as societal leaders, but representation of women is limited at the parliament and national level as both countries have failed to adopt a quota system (Yusoff, Sarjoon, & Othman, 2016). In Sri Lanka, though, women's participation in less common vocations and decision-making positions is slightly increasing (Department of Census and Statistics, 2015). In Malaysia, a national policy is in place

that promotes women's status and garners international support to foster the advancement of women (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat et al., 2015). However, limited political representation remains a concern for both of these countries as equitable participation of men and women is a cornerstone in building a sustainable democracy (Yusoff et al., 2016).

While organizational practices among the five Asian countries have differences to some extent, changes and trends in the workplace provide the fundamentals to support and develop women in leadership. In our review, Asian organizations have created women-friendly workplaces as the proportion of women employees and leaders has increased. As women have more equal work and economic opportunities and easier access to male-dominant fields than in the past, women can possess higher status, have more opportunities to develop their potential and talent, provide a broader future leadership pool, and create stronger leader groups than before. In this sense, understanding the change and trends of current workplaces in the Asian countries would help us to be aware of social and cultural consensus on the importance and role of female workforce and leaders at work.

Emphasis on Women's Education

The educational scenario for women has been optimistic for all five countries, helping to provide women with improved qualifications for leadership. In India, an increase of adult literacy programs has resulted in significantly decreasing gender gaps (Bhat, 2015). The National Literacy Mission was established in 1988 to provide extension education to women by equipping them with job-related knowledge, introducing mass functional literacy, and promoting widespread community involvement in educating women through graduation from high school (Kumar & Sangeeta, 2013). Similarly, Chinese women's education level has been rising with increases at the tertiary education level being more dramatic than at the primary and secondary education levels (Cooke, 2011). In 2014, 55% and 46% of new students in bachelor's and master's degree programs, respectively, were women (OECD, 2016). However, it will take time for the educational attainment level of the female workforce to

catch up with that of the male workforce because of the more significant gaps between the two among the older employees.

Increasing women's participation in education has been a remarkable achievement in the Sri Lankan, Malaysian, and Korean education systems. In Sri Lanka, women are entering non-traditional fields and vocations, such as technology, science, and engineering fields (Fernando, 2012). A higher number of Malaysian women are entering higher education. In undergraduate programs, Malaysian women students' enrolment increased from 50% in 1995 to 65% in 2012 (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2012). Korea provides enough educational opportunities regardless of gender. For instance, Korea has demonstrated one of the highest educational attainments across Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (OECD, 2016). In 2015, 45% of Korean adults attaining tertiary education were women (OECD, 2016).

Blurring of Gender Roles

Many Asian organizations are introducing gender-neutral roles. There have been multifaceted efforts from all spheres including organizations, laws, policies, society, media, and the protagonist, *today's women*, which will eventually reduce the gender gap in organizations. For instance, Indian women have started entering professions that were once considered to be exclusively for men (Kumar, 2016; Rath, Mohanty, & Pradhan, 2015). Many fields have opened up opportunities for women professionals, including banking, marketing, IT, health care, advertising, civil services, communications, and the armed forces. One particular influence has been the role of the Indian film industry in blurring gender roles, especially in the past few years. The Indian film industry, often called Bollywood, is the largest film making industry in the world and plays a crucial role in modernizing the mindset of Indian audiences (Agarwal, 2014). Of late, there have been films on women empowerment, changing roles of women, working moms, and stay-at-home dads, definitely sensitizing the Indian mindset.

Chinese and Korean women leaders also have actively confronted prejudice in gender-role stereotyping (Cooke, 2005; Kang & Rowley, 2005;

Kim, 2007; Kim, Lee, Kim, Kim, & Kang, 2005; Liu, 2013; Peus et al., 2015). Chinese women leaders have advanced their career by working harder and smarter; gaining credibility and legitimacy through their professionalism and performance; and through taking advantage of continuous professional development opportunities (Liu, 2013). Korean women leaders are breaking the glass ceiling in many global corporations, which provide evidence that the perception that Korean women are inferior to men in leadership is prejudiced and primarily derived from traditional gender stereotypes (Kim, 2007; Kim & Chang, 2002).

While politics has played a dominant role in blurring gender roles in Sri Lanka, favorable legislative policies have helped to advance the cause in Malaysia. In recent times, Sri Lankan women are increasingly entering politics, producing the world's first woman prime minister and the first woman president. Evidence shows that women are increasingly entering legal, economic, and social leadership positions with their demonstrated leadership capabilities. Sri Lankan women are becoming global business owners and leading entrepreneurs (Hewapathirana, 2010). Thus, societal attitudes are slowly changing to accept women as equal partners in many aspects of society, economic, and political spheres. Malaysia is showing remarkable growth of women entering science and technology education and complex technology-related vocations due to its legislative support for women (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat et al., 2015).

Discussion and Implications

Reviewing the barriers and the successes of women leaders in the five Asian countries showed that there are more similarities than differences. The similarities arise from their collectivist orientation, patriarchal culture, and social norms that have worked against women's empowerment. Gender-biased roles and practices in organizations pose an enormous challenge to break through the typical stereotypes of women in leadership roles. However, emphasis on women's education and opportunities in diverse sectors in the countries is promising and will steadily but surely help in making a dent on the glass ceiling.

The active role of governments in securing gender equality, progressive social movements, and favorable organizational policies are a source of differences for these five countries. The lessons learned from each country will be an opportunity for other countries to follow examples and institutionalize changes in their systems after scrutiny and improvisation to suit country-specific demographics and culture, assuming that the governments have the will to do what is necessary to improve the lot of women in seeking leadership positions throughout society.

The education sector in each country can play a pivotal role in further encouraging women's active participation in non-traditional vocational education, such as science, engineering, IT, and management fields that may support a paradigm shift in viewing women's position in cultural and social contexts. In the five Asian countries briefly explored, organizations are steadily adopting women-friendly and inclusive practices. However, such adoption does not directly lead to a proportional increase in women leaders.

Women leaders can impact society in two important ways. First, women in government positions could pass and implement policies that make the path easier for other women professionals to follow. And second, they can set examples by walking the talk and by becoming role models. The need is for them to form strong social networks using social media platforms whereby women could help and draw from each other as they aim for coveted leadership roles. Our review has shown that only a handful of women have been able to reach managerial positions due to innumerable obstacles. The majority of women are unemployed or underemployed in lower paid unskilled work or lower positions. This underutilization of women's labor is a waste of valuable resources that leads to women's limited contributions to the economy, business, and society. There is an urgent need for empowering women through training and development initiatives to prepare them to be top leaders in Asia. As a progressive talent management strategy, organizations could introduce gender quotas not only to attract women employees, but also to promote their untapped talent (Tatli et al., 2013).

Simultaneously, there is a need for a change in societal attitudes toward women as weaker members. Indian cinema has played a pivotal role by portraying women characters in strong gender-neutral roles. This has tre-

mendously helped break the ice with gender stereotyping and in boosting the image of Indian women. Other Asian countries are discovering the power of the cinema, as illustrated by the overwhelming acceptance of Korean soap operas across Asia. Other countries may follow these examples. However, before replicating policies and programs across nations, there must be a recognition of local and national cultures.

Recommendations for Further Research

Considering that these five countries have more similarities than dissimilarities, there is a need for empirical studies that would scrutinize existing gender-neutral practices from each country. Future research should not be limited to gender diversity and organizational effectiveness, but it should focus on gaining deeper understanding of women's potential contributions to economic, political, and social spheres of life, as well as all types of domestic and global organizations. More in-depth research with emic and etic analyses are needed to uncover strategies that can improve gender diversity in leadership positions to improve the dynamism of government, arts, sports, social services, healthcare, media, entertainment, IT, and all types of industries. Research that aims to develop new strategies and create environments that are essential for women to achieve their potential in each country would be useful. Thus, creating an interest in new research agenda and sharing those practices among nations by way of collective forums at national, regional, and global levels would generate momentum for enhancing women's leadership.

Conclusion

Having analyzed the historical and current practices, social-cultural and gender stereotypical social norms, beliefs, and attitudes that hinder Asian women from reaching the top leadership, it is time to take women's empowerment beyond the level of rhetoric. Empowering women not only benefits the women, but also the society in general, and it is especially true for developing countries (Phan, 2016). Given the evidence

that we have presented from five Asian countries, it is time for responsible governments, educational institutions, and other authorities at all levels, and especially women to walk the talk more seriously than ever. Creating a strong research agenda, initiating momentum by creating awareness of potential contributions of women, highlighting role models and evidence-based strategic actions to create a conducive environment to increase women's participation in top leadership, introducing more women-friendly policies in organizations, and a pro-women government legislation that cumulatively paints a harbinger of rising women power are a few suggestions.

Asian organizations should continue to create opportunities for women to demonstrate their talents to gain economic and social stability, thus aiming to reduce gender disparity and unequal treatment. Organizations should be transparent in accessing the human resource talent pool cutting across gender differences; they must provide equal opportunity to the best talent to rise to top management and corporate board without gender biases for the benefit of the individual, the organization, and the economy.

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Part V

Closing

This closing part focuses on the many reasons why women face barriers to leadership and why they face a significant pay gap compared with men as noted in the different chapters in this book. This chapter also compares the situation in India with the situation faced by women in other countries, primarily the USA: parenthood, occupational choice, and discrimination and sex bias and then presents some avenues that present hope for Indian women.



15

From Darkness into Light: Hope for the Future of Women in Leadership in India

Gary N. McLean

I recently wrote of my experiences in India while attending the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) Asian conference held in Ahmedabad in November, 2017. This experience explains the title of this chapter:

We were approaching the end of the Diwali celebration, a Hindu festival commemorating the victory of good over evil through enlightenment. During the inaugural session, the honored guests lit candles in a circle (see Fig. 15.1), symbolizing, according to the session emcee, the emergence of light from darkness. Many world religions use candles in a similar way. In this article, we use candles as a symbol to represent our hope, and the hope of many, that societies across Asia (and, indeed, across the world) will make the necessary changes in processes, culture, and opportunities to support women in employment and promotion to top levels of organizations. (Cho & McLean, 2017, para. 1)

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Fig. 15.1 Diwali candle circle (Source: rajkumar1220 (2010)) <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ahinsajain/5151014627/>; Used under Creative Commons License CC BY 2.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/legalcode>)

At that same conference, a participant commented about the situation for women in leadership as “light arising out of the dark.” Just two months ago, I lost my wife, a champion of women in leadership, to cancer, after 50 years of living together. As I write this, I am in Jacksonville Beach, Florida, with two of my daughters cleaning out my condo in preparation for moving back to Minnesota. On an early morning, my youngest daughter, Cynthia, and a friend went to the beach, just a block from the condo, and took the picture below. It is symbolic in so many ways: personally, as a reminder of how much my wife loved the beach; and professionally, as a reminder that, no matter how dark it gets, the sun always rises, and, in this case, it arises in such beauty (Fig. 15.2).

In India, too, we see this symbolism. At one time, women were powerful and occupied leadership roles, as reviewed in many of the chapters of this book. But then, sadly, primarily through misinterpretation and wrongful use of religious doctrines, darkness came, stifling the talents and opportunities for leadership for most women—not just in India, but around the world. But the hope of this book, and, indeed, the hope of the entire series on *Current Perspectives on Women in Leadership*, is that the light is beginning to rise. It may be rising slowly, but the evidence abounds that it is rising.



Fig. 15.2 Sunrise at Jacksonville Beach, Florida

Why Is It So Difficult for the Light to Shine?

AAUW (2018) outlined many reasons for the continuing gender pay gap. In this section, I explored these reasons and compared them with their possible application in India.

Parenthood

Women's labor force participation rate is lower than that of men's in the USA, as around the world, largely accounted for by the biological realities of women's roles in parenting. At a minimum, women have some time off the job during the delivery and recovery time. And nursing, while healthy for both baby and mother, also ties up the mother with

one more responsibility. Further, cultural norms allow, or even require, women to remain at home for some time for the childcare role. And, in some cultures, as has been the case in India, raising children, educating them, and taking care of the home are considered primary responsibilities of women.

Occupational Choice

A partial explanation for differences in pay between women and men has to do with choices of occupation. Women are disproportionately employed in education, office and administrative support, and health care occupations, while men are disproportionately employed in construction, maintenance and repair, and production and transportation occupations (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). And country cultures, strangely from my perspective, seem to reward those occupations in which men dominate through higher pay, while their articulated values put greater worth on the nurturing occupations most widely chosen by women. Why there is not more congruence between values and pay has always puzzled me and it puzzles me still.

Discrimination and Sex Bias

College majors are beginning to change. In both India and the USA, we see women increasingly selecting majors in business, information technology, engineering, law, and medicine, which is accounting for a slow closing of the pay gap. But we also see how feminization of a career leads to a decrease in pay. Consider, for example, that human resources have now become largely a business choice made by women. And human resources professionals are at the bottom of the pay scale for business roles. So, it is not just choice of college major and occupational choice that accounts for the pay gap, but the endemic prejudice and bias that mark our societies.

Such discrimination is deeply embedded in our cultures and is heavily influenced by our religious teachings, regardless of the religious faith influencing the culture. Unless our religious leaders are willing to confront

the contextualization of our religious writings and teachings in a time long, long ago, we are not likely to see much relief from this discrimination and cultural bias. The world of 2018 is not the same as the world of 5500 BCE (the roots of Hinduism) or of 1300 BCE (Moses' time) or 28 CE (Jesus' death), or 632 CE (the death of Muhammed). Yet, the view of women promulgated in those times still influences how women are viewed in these various faiths even today. And many of these faiths have rigid beliefs about the inerrancy and timelessness of the writings contained in their holy books. Is it any surprise, then, that women are still discriminated against across the globe?

To understand how deeply embedded discrimination, and even ambiguity, about the role of women in the Indian culture is noted in two contradictory quotes from the India icon, Mahatma Gandhi (Gupta, 2013): "Woman is, by habit or nature, queen of the household. She is not designed to organize on a large scale" (p. 141). This quote, then, establishes women's realm in the house, incapable of organizing (or managing) in a corporate setting, allocating that realm to men. Yet, in the second quote, he contradicts this statement: "There is no occasion for women to consider them subordinate or inferior to men" (p. 141). This ambiguity continues to mark the role of women within the Indian culture. With multiple factors influencing the role of women in opposing directions, it is difficult for women to make the kind of progress that would move them toward equality.

What Must Happen to Quell the Darkness?

Change such as this is not going to come quickly. While emptying my apartment in St. Paul to move to Minneapolis, I discovered a small cup containing pins with messages like

"A woman's place is in the house—the White House"

"We are everywhere"

"55¢" [the amount a woman was paid for each dollar a man was paid]

"We try harder and get paid less"

"Sexism is a social disease"

Since the 1960s, the USA has come a long way—but not far enough. As of 2016, full-time employed women across the USA earned 80% of men's earnings, and no state was higher than 89% (New York) (AAUW, 2018). These statistics suggest how very difficult it has been to improve women's pay compared with that of men's in the USA. Given the religious and cultural components leading to the gender pay gap in India, is it going to take another 50 years to move Indian women's pay close to men's? I sincerely hope not. Yet, consider the following words.

This afternoon (as I write this), I attended the play, *Man of La Mancha*. A song sung many times, and a favorite of mine, was “To dream the impossible dream, to fight the unbeatable foe,” and so on. It reminded me of a favorite poem that I studied in high school, *Andrea Del Sarto*: “A man's [person's] reach should exceed his [/her] grasp, else what's a heaven for?” Thus, no matter how difficult the challenge, the vision of equality must be fostered and steps taken that will move India in the direction of such equality. As the words of this song and this poem suggest, complete equality may be very far off. But, efforts to move toward equality will definitely improve women's leadership opportunities in the workplace.

What was done in the USA to move forward toward equality? And might similar steps be taken in India? Care must be taken in drawing a complete parallel, as there are so many differences in the cultures and histories of the two countries.

Enact New Laws and Enforce Existing Laws

Until the current administration at the federal level, the movement toward equality has been marked by major federal legislation. But federal initiatives have not been sufficient to achieve equality. Especially as President Trump is rolling back regulations that have supported greater equality (AAUW, 2018), states have had to step up and pass state legislation. Minnesota, for example, has a law that requires all public employers to do a pay audit and adjust pay when a gender pay gap is identified (AAUW, 2018).

India, likewise, has seen some progress through the passage of federal legislation, as highlighted in the chapters of this book. However, these chapters also indicate where these laws have been ignored, with weak

enforcement. As in the USA, when federal officials are not committed to the concept of gender equality, no matter what laws are in place, their implementation is not likely to be effective. This lack of commitment is compounded by the many regional differences in culture that exist across both India and the USA. As we have read, many states in India are very conservative on gender issues, making the implementation of federal law difficult. It then, also, becomes unlikely that such state legislatures are likely to do anything to advance the rights of women in the workplace. By moving legislation to the state level, states that are more likely to support equality are then able to move forward with their own legislation, not constrained by actions taken at the federal level. We have also heard how villages and their legislative bodies have been able to make major advancements through the courageous leadership of some village women. The same can be done by other villages as women develop a foothold and have the courage to step up to the need for such leadership.

Focus on Youth

It may be too late to focus on those who are already entrenched in their own ways, whether it is in their personal or professional lives. However, there is still time to focus on those who are still in their career and relationship development years, that is, young people. Organizations that focus on youth, such as in sports, the arts, and social activities, may have the greatest opportunity to change the culture of leadership in India and elsewhere. Modisane (2018), for example, argued that focusing on youth may be the best approach to leadership development in emerging economies, especially in Africa. It was very interesting to observe, while in India to attend the AHRD conference, the amount of coverage in the newspaper of women's sports, a surprise to me, but encouraging for the future development of leadership by girls and women. Here are some of the headlines from the November 6, 2017 issue of *The Times of India*:

Indian Women Win Asia Cup, Book World Cup Spot: Bandra girl hits 202 n.o. off 163 balls in U-19 one-dayer [cricket] (opp. p. 1)

Indian Women Are Asia's Best [field hockey] (p. 16)

... Divine Child [International School] Girls Win [soccer] (p. 16)

Sarta, Two Others Enter Asian Boxing Semifinals [boxing] (p. 15)

There was also a story on Indian women cyclers, as well as non-Indian women in tennis and golf. The point of this is that women are gaining leadership and teamwork experience in sports, as men have for a long time, and are also receiving recognition from sports journalists.

Equalize College Major and Occupational Choice

In societies in which there is freedom of choice for college major and occupation, equalizing such choices is not an easy task. However, there are things that can be done if there is a desire to see this outcome. First, and by far the most important, we need to have congruence between our values and our economic rewards. It is a travesty to find entertainers and professional athletes having outrageous incomes, while teachers and healthcare workers, in both the USA and India, barely exist on their salaries. It is not sufficient for government officials to say, "Well, they took the job so they must be satisfied with their pay." That is simply not the case. Many of our teachers and healthcare workers are devoted to meeting humanitarian needs. Should they be penalized economically for such devotion? And if governments respond to this need, they will need to get the increased money from some place, likely from taxes, meaning that there will be less discretionary funds to spend on entertainment and sports, thus reducing the income from those in these currently highly paid professions.

Second, more highly paid professions in which women are currently under-represented can be made more attractive to women in many ways. Colleges can aggressively recruit high school girls for the majors in which men dominate. Scholarships can be offered to make college attendance more viable. Universities can hire more women faculty members in those fields, thus providing the girls with role models in those fields. Formal mentoring programs can be established to help support women students through their college programs. Internships can be provided in high quality companies that will help the students to excel in their education and put them in better positions to be hired by such companies on their graduation. More stringent policies and policing may be necessary to keep the men in such majors from bullying or harassing the women students.

At the same time, men need to be attracting to those majors and occupations that currently have attracted women. To some degree, this

is already happening in the healthcare professions, especially nursing. As economic rewards follow an awareness of the value of those professions that have traditionally attracted women, men are also likely to be attracted to those majors and professions. As with the suggestions for attracting women to men-dominated majors and occupations, the opposite can be done to attract men to such women-dominated majors and occupations.

For these things to happen, we will need forward-thinking leaders at the top of our countries. They will need to be able to work with advocates for gender equality. They will need legislatures, local government officials, and civil servants who are committed to seeing such progress. They will need university officials who are prepared to make significant changes in the culture of their universities. None of this will be easy. But it can happen. Just as we have learned from Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, change takes a long time, but cultures *can* change.

Develop Negotiating Skills

When mentoring faculty members from Asia who are now working in universities in the USA, I have often found them to be surprised by some of my suggestions. They ask, "Can I do that? Won't that be considered rude? Won't I get fired for doing that?" All of these questions emanate from their cultural context in which, indeed, my suggestions might be considered rude and inappropriate. But, if they are going to look out for themselves and their families, and get what they deserve, they must learn to be assertive. In the USA, it is generally considered to be appropriate to be assertive, so long as one is not aggressive. And that is a very fine line to learn if one has not been raised in the cultural context in which it is appropriate for a woman to be assertive.

Thus, in cultures where even assertiveness on the part of women might be considered to be inappropriate, there is a need for women to learn the tools and limits of negotiation. Thus, in India, as an example, women's organizations might offer negotiation training. Formal mentoring programs might be created, as well, for women to learn how to determine the bounds in their organizational contexts, to learn where acceptable assertiveness becomes unacceptable aggressiveness.

Demand Family-Friendly Benefits

When the University of Minnesota recently took steps to close a daycare facility that had been available for the use of faculty, staff, and students for the past 45 years, there was large-scale outcry, not just from the families using the facility, but also from administrators. They claimed that the daycare facility was one of the reasons why the University has been so successful in attracting top-rated women faculty and students. It did not take long for the decision to close the facility to be overturned.

When there is concerted energy to create family-friendly benefits, they will likely be installed. And when there are family-friendly benefits (such as maternity and paternity leaves with pay, daycare facilities, nursing facilities, and elder-care leaves), then it is more likely that mothers will continue to work, thus closing one barrier to women having equal labor participation rates, participating less in training and development activities, being less likely to be promoted, and losing out on regular pay increments because of time away from the job.

But this will take leadership. Who will lead the movement to demand such benefits? Unions, which led the charge for many worker rights in the early 1900s, tend to have the same biases as those leading organizations. So, pressure will need to be put on unions, where they exist, to take pro-women stances. India has shown, as shared in many of the chapters, that there are women who have been successful in leading the change in the Indian society. By focusing on changes in Indian organizations, along with some of the examples set by multinational corporations, such changes can occur in the Indian context.

Let Employer Self-Interest Take Its Course

Of all the steps proposed in this chapter, this is likely to be the easiest to implement and to have the quickest payoff. In most countries in the world, demographics will force employers to set aside their gender biases. This will happen more quickly in some countries than in others. In many countries today, the birth rate is so low that the population is dropping, in some cases rapidly, and countries need to look to immigration as a

means of obtaining a sufficient workforce, not just to meet the demand for employees, but also to have a working base to support the elderly whose life spans are expanding. Employer self-interest has always been to look out for themselves. Saliba (2016) argued that the talent challenge may well be the most important issue facing business in the years ahead. When it becomes evident that women are the most highly qualified talent, when there are an insufficient number of men to meet the demand for talented employees, no matter what personal values and biases are, they will look to hire women to gain competitive advantage.

Change the Culture

Around the world today (in an estimated 800 cities), as I write this section, millions of people, led by courageous and dedicated young people, protested against the lack of safety in schools and the violence caused by guns. Whether this will have the impact of the civil rights movement or the women's march, even though both efforts have failed to fulfill their full vision, is still unknown. What marks all of these movements, however, has been the desire to change the culture in the USA in significant ways. But changing culture is very difficult to do. Even at a micro-level, we find that changing the culture of an organization is difficult. Changing the culture of a nation, or of a societal factor that is global, will be extremely difficult. In spite of that, however, we cannot become complacent because the task is difficult. Creating cultures that have truly gender-blind workplaces will require the dedication, hard work, creativity, and patience of everyone—regardless of gender, age, race, class, politics, educational level, and any other demographic that traditionally separates us.

Women (in India and everywhere) have the competencies necessary to function in leadership roles—except for the barriers created by culture. Park, Jeong, Jang, Yoon, and Lim (2018), after exploring multiple global leadership models, identified five themes (intercultural, interpersonal, global, change, and vision), in addition to personal traits and values. This is largely consistent with the findings of Kim and McLean (2015) who identified the following dimensions of global leadership: interpersonal, intercultural, global business, and global organizations. It would be very

difficult to argue that women do not possess these characteristics to the same extent as men, leaving the culture of India as the primary reason why women in India do not experience leadership roles as men do.

Conclusion

I can think of no better way to end this chapter, and, indeed, this book, than to quote a story that I heard many years ago, with an unknown author with, purportedly, a South Asian origin:

Two village youngsters, who were known as troublemakers who had been admonished several times by the village elder, wanted to get back at the elder. They caught a young bird and approached the elder with the bird in their hands, hiding the bird. They asked, “Elder, is the bird dead or alive?” If the answer was dead, then they would release the bird and let it fly away. If the answer was alive, they would crush the bird, killing it. In either case, they thought that they would show up the elder. The elder pondered for a few minutes and answered: “The answer, my children, is in your hands.” That conclusion applies to us. Will women in Asia have greater opportunities for leadership? Will men in Asia have greater opportunities for child-care and in the home? The answer is in our hands. (Cho & McLean, 2017, final para.)

May you remain committed to the cause of justice and equality. With the combined efforts of us all, the light will rise, and there will no longer be darkness when it comes to women in leadership anywhere in the world.

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