GENDER DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AT WORKPLACE: TIME FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT IN ORGANISATIONAL PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON IT ORGANIZATIONS IN NAVI MUMBAI

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Abstract

Gender balance (or gender diversity) is by far the most high-profile of all inclusion and diversity topics in the corporate world. Diversity inclusion and managing diversity are becoming strategic issues for the multinational companies throughout the world. The technology sector is the second biggest employer of women in India, behind the pharmaceutical and care sector, according to a new report launched at the *NASSCOM Diversity & Inclusion Summit 2017*, held in Bangalore. India's IT-BPM (business process management) industry currently employs nearly 3.9 million people, of which over 34 percent are women (1.3 million). The ' Women and IT Scorecard – India report', generated by NASSCOM in partnership with The Open University in the UK, states that over 51 percent of entry level recruits in the IT sector are women. Over 25 percent of women hold managerial positions and 1 percent are senior executives. In 2017, the number of firms that have more than 20 percent women at senior level will increase to nearly 60 percent, and nearly 51 percent of firms will have more than 20 percent of women at senior executive level, the report authors estimate. Tina Vinod, a diversity and inclusivity, said that while some firms are progressive and invest heavily in increasing the pipeline of women leaders within their organizations by adopting exclusive policies and comeback programs for women who have taken a break, others fall short. "Unfortunately, the systemic patriarchy and unconscious bias in our culture continues to seep into the workforce," she added, "The leaking pipeline of potential women leaders is a huge concern. Women continue to be viewed as primary care-givers and homemakers and this is a problem that our society as a whole needs to address.". This paper examines influence of different obstacles while managing the gender diversity at workplace and impact of diversity management programs and practices in different IT companies

Keywords : *Gender diversity, Diversity Management Programs and Practices, Obstacles, IT industry*

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Introduction

Women already head at least nine banks, five FMCG companies and at least eight IT/ITeS companies in India. There are at least 7% of women as board members in listed companies in India– but at least 50% of them are family members of the owners, according to data from AVTAR Career Creators. With so few women making it from junior to middle levels, the pool of women able to move to senior level positions is that much smaller, and therefore the problem of the leaking pipeline is actually more severe. Across the globe, there is growing global awareness of the need to increase gender diversity in the workforce. Most companies have a diversity mandate and run a slew of initiatives to attract female tech talent. From female hiring drives to leadership development programmes to 'bringing the women back' initiatives to special incentives to refer female candidates, Indian IT companies are using innovative techniques to hire and retain female tech talent.

Literature Review

According to a report released in its 10th edition of Diversity and Inclusion Summit, Nasscom pointed out that the percentage of women working in the sector has gone up from 28 per cent in the 2016 fiscal to 34 per cent in the 2017 fiscal.

After careful review of various literature following potential benefits were identified for promoting and managing gender diversity in organizations

➢ There's enough evidence and research that suggests that having more females in teams fosters innovation, creativity, productivity and results in more revenue.

➢ A 2015 study of companies in the UK, US and India by accountancy firm Grant Thornton, found that companies with diverse executive boards outperform those that are all-male.

➢ Another study conducted in the same year by index provider MSCI, found that companies with more women on their boards delivered a 36 percent better return on equity since 2010 than those groups lacking board diversity.

➢ According to a study conducted by the Pittsburgh-based human resources consulting firm

DDI, the companies that perform best financially have the greatest numbers of women in leadership roles

> ➤ In 2012, a Harvard study found that "at every level, more women were rated by their peers, their bosses, their direct reports, and their other associates as better overall leaders than their male counterparts
> ➤ There have also been studies to show that women leaders are more loyal to the organization. They bring in greater stability and are less prone to attrition.

Objective

The primary aim of this paper is to find out perception of employees across different age groups and gender with regards to various obstacles which organization encounter in promoting and managing gender diversity. The study also tries to examine the influence of several diversity programs and practices, which are commonly adopted in IT industry.

Methodology

Sample size of the study is 80 employees from various IT companies in Navi Mumbai. Judgment sampling was adopted to distribute the samples among the population. The structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from the sampled companies. Following Questionnaires were designed for the research:

> ➤ Questionnaire 1 – was devised to get opinion on obstacles prevailing with respect to gender diversity in IT organizations. Respondents were asked to rate on parameters starting from Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Uncertain (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5)
>> ➤ Questionnaire 2 - Rate effectiveness of various programs & policies available within organizations to promote gender diversity. Respondents were asked to rate on parameters starting from Very Low (1), Low (2), Medium (3), High (4), Very High (5)

Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. Perception of Gender Diversity: The test was conducted to find out the perception of Gender Diversity among males and females and to signify any difference in perception amongst them.

			Perception of Gender Diversity		
			Yes	No	Total
Gender:	Male	Count	31	**10**	41
		Expected Count	31.3	9.7	41.0
	Female	Count	**30**	9	39
		Expected Count	29.7	9.3	39.0
Total		Count	61	19	80
		Expected Count	61.0	19.0	80.0

Table 1: Perception of Gender Diversity

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.019a	1	.890		
Continuity Correction[b]	0.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.019	1	.890		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.550
Linear-by-Linear Association	.019	1	.891		
N of Valid Cases	80				

Table 2: Chi-Square Test for Perception on Gender Diversity

Interpretation

The actual count is more than the expected count for males, indicating that males perceive a lack of gender diversity in organizations as compared to females, who perceive that gender diversity does exist.

The chi-square value is low whereas the P value indicates that there is no significant difference between the perception of males and females with regards to their perception on gender diversity.

2. Perception of Gender Diversity amongst Males and Females across all Age Groups

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2" colspan="4">Gender</td><td colspan="4">Age</td><td rowspan="2">Total</td></tr>
<tr><td>20 to 30 years</td><td>30 to 40 years</td><td>40 to 50 years</td><td>50 years and above</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="8">Male</td><td rowspan="4">Perception on Diversity</td><td rowspan="2">Yes</td><td>Count</td><td>12</td><td>15</td><td>4</td><td>0</td><td>31</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected Count</td><td>11.3</td><td>14.4</td><td>4.5</td><td>.8</td><td>31.0</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">No</td><td>Count</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected Count</td><td>3.7</td><td>4.6</td><td>1.5</td><td>.2</td><td>10.0</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Total</td><td>Count</td><td>15</td><td>19</td><td>6</td><td>1</td><td>41</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected Count</td><td>15.0</td><td>19.0</td><td>6.0</td><td>1.0</td><td>41.0</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="8">Female</td><td rowspan="4">Perception on Diversity</td><td rowspan="2">Yes</td><td>Count</td><td>19</td><td>6</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>30</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected Count</td><td>18.5</td><td>7.7</td><td>3.1</td><td>.8</td><td>30.0</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">No</td><td>Count</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected Count</td><td>5.5</td><td>2.3</td><td>.9</td><td>.2</td><td>9.0</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Total</td><td>Count</td><td>24</td><td>10</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>39</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected Count</td><td>24.0</td><td>10.0</td><td>4.0</td><td>1.0</td><td>39.0</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="8">Total</td><td rowspan="4">Perception on Diversity</td><td rowspan="2">Yes</td><td>Count</td><td>31</td><td>21</td><td>8</td><td>1</td><td>61</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected Count</td><td>29.7</td><td>22.1</td><td>7.6</td><td>1.5</td><td>61.0</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">No</td><td>Count</td><td>8</td><td>8</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>19</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected Count</td><td>9.3</td><td>6.9</td><td>2.4</td><td>.5</td><td>19.0</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Total</td><td>Count</td><td>39</td><td>29</td><td>10</td><td>2</td><td>80</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expected Count</td><td>39.0</td><td>29.0</td><td>10.0</td><td>2.0</td><td>80.0</td></tr>
</table>

Table 3: Perception of Gender Diversity across age groups

Chi-Square Tests				
Gender		**Value**	**df**	**Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)**
Male	Pearson Chi-Square	**3.632**[b]	3	**.304**
	Likelihood Ratio	3.347	3	.341
	Linear-by-Linear Association	1.629	1	.202
	N of Valid Cases	41		
Female	Pearson Chi-Square	**3.181**[c]	3	**.364**
	Likelihood Ratio	4.112	3	.250
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.166	1	.684
	N of Valid Cases	39		
Total	Pearson Chi-Square	1.300[a]	3	.729
	Likelihood Ratio	1.187	3	.756
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.416	1	.519
	N of Valid Cases	80		

Table 4: Chi-square test for gender and age cross tabulation

Interpretation:

Table 03 clearly indicates that the perception among younger males aged between 20 to 30 years and 30 to 40 years is that gender diversity exists in the organization. However the older generation aged 40 years and above feels that gender diversity does not exist. Amongst females, with an exception of females aged between 30 to 40 years all the others feel that gender diversity does exist within the organization.

Table 04 indicates a high chi-square value for both male and female. The P value indicates that there is no significant difference between the perception of males and females across age groups with regards to gender diversity.

3. Effectiveness of programs and policies adopted amongst Males and Females across all Age Groups

Gender				Age				Total
				20 to 30 years	30 to 40 years	40 to 50 years	50 years and above	
Male	Effectiveness on programs	Yes	Count	**12**	14	4	**1**	31
			Expected Count	11.3	14.4	4.5	.8	31.0
		No	Count	3	**5**	**2**	0	10
			Expected Count	3.7	4.6	1.5	.2	10.0
	Total		Count	15	19	6	1	41
			Expected Count	15.0	19.0	6.0	1.0	41.0
Female	Effectiveness on programs	Yes	Count	**15**	5	2	**1**	23
			Expected Count	14.2	5.9	2.4	.6	23.0
		No	Count	9	**5**	**2**	0	16
			Expected Count	9.8	4.1	1.6	.4	16.0
	Total		Count	24	10	4	1	39
			Expected Count	24.0	10.0	4.0	1.0	39.0
Total	Effectiveness on programs	Yes	Count	**27**	19	6	**2**	54
			Expected Count	26.3	19.6	6.8	1.4	54.0
		No	Count	12	**10**	**4**	0	26
			Expected Count	12.7	9.4	3.3	.7	26.0
	Total		Count	39	29	10	2	80
			Expected Count	39.0	29.0	10.0	2.0	80.0

Table 5: Effectiveness of Programs amongst age groups

Chi-Square Tests				
Gender		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Male	Pearson Chi-Square	**.778**^{b}	3	**.855**
	Likelihood Ratio	1.003	3	.801
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.111	1	.739
	N of Valid Cases	41		
Female	Pearson Chi-Square	**1.285**^{c}	3	**.733**
	Likelihood Ratio	1.639	3	.651
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.025	1	.874
	N of Valid Cases	39		
Total	Pearson Chi-Square	1.325^a	3	.723
	Likelihood Ratio	1.925	3	.588
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.001	1	.970
	N of Valid Cases	80		

Table 6: Chi-square test on effectives of programs across age groups

Interpretation:

As per Table 05, both males and females between the age group of 20 to 30 years and 50 years and above feel that gender diversity programs are being adopted and they are effective. Middle aged individuals feel that these programs and policies implemented for achieving and promoting gender diversity are not effective.

Chi-square values as per Table 06 show that females have a higher value than males. However there is no significant impact of gender and age on people's perception of effectiveness of programs and policies.

4. T-test on difference in perception amongst males and females with regards to obstacles to gender diversity within the organization

	Possible obstacles in managing Gender Diversity	Male		Female		T value	P Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Patriarchal corporate culture	3.54	1.142	3.54	0.913	.008	.994
2	Inadequate information about existing diversity policies and practices	3.51	1.028	**3.69**	**.655**	**.929**	**.356**
3	Perception, that women returning from maternity leave might not be able to balance work and caring responsibilities	3.22	1.151	3.46	1.374	.856	.395
4	Lack of flexible work solutions or inadequate work life balance priorities	**3.80**	**.980**	4.03	1.135	**.932**	**.354**
5	lack of opportunities of critical work experience and responsibility for women employees	3.24	1.261	3.51	1.275	.949	.346
6	Less Initiatives to attract female tech talent in middle management level	2.88	1.452	3.44	1.188	1.875	.065
7	Biased performance assessments and career progression decisions	3.05	1.303	3.33	1.344	.961	.339
8	Challenges of hiring given government regulations such as working hours, statutory maternity pay and parental leave	3.51	1.267	3.58	1.138	.473	.638
9	Lack of mentoring, networking & leadership development opportunities for female employees	3.15	1.542	3.44	1.373	.885	.379
10	Less Gender inclusion endorsement by CEO and Senior Management	3.37	1.199	3.33	1.199	.121	.904

Table 7: T-test on difference in perception amongst males and females

Interpretation:

As per the above table, according to male respondents the biggest obstacle to gender diversity is lack of flexible work solutions whereas, female respondents have mutually agreed on the most important obstacle being inadequate information about existing diversity policies and practices. The highest mean with the lowest standard deviation has been considered to come to the above conclusion.

5. T-test on difference in perception amongst males and females with regards to effectiveness of programs and policies for promotion of gender diversity

	Effectiveness of various programs and practices	Male		Female		T value	P Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Training and sensitization for managers on gender inclusion to avoid gender bias	3.63	1.067	**3.92**	**.900**	**1.306**	**.195**
2	Awareness and promotion of HR policies and programs available in organization to improve gender diversity	3.76	1.113	3.85	.961	.387	.700
3	Flexible work arrangements, sabbatical leaves, Workplace Clubs, Health workshops to promote work life balance	3.59	1.140	3.85	.933	1.117	.268
4	Availability of active Women forums, diversity workshops and seminars at workplace	3.56	1.119	3.69	1.104	.528	.599
5	Initiatives to attract female tech talent in middle management level, through special "Female hiring drives" and special incentives to refer female candidates	3.44	1.163	3.69	1.004	1.040	.301
6	Building an inclusive interview panel to foster fair assessment while hiring	3.61	1.202	3.56	1.142	.174	.862
7	Handling issues like sexual harassment with sensitivity and speed	**4.07**	**1.149**	4.03	1.038	**.194**	**.847**
8	More networking and mentoring opportunities being provided to young women employees interacting with senior women leadership	3.68	1.213	3.72	1.099	.135	.893
9	Collecting regular feedback through surveys and focus group discussions on gender diversity programs	3.49	1.052	3.54	1.047	.216	.830
10	Enough funding, involvement and commitment by top leaders by reserving quota in hiring, promoting, retaining and development	3.49	1.028	3.41	1.117	.323	.747

Table 8: **T-test on difference in perception amongst males and females**

Interpretation:

As per the above table, male respondents have agreed that handling issues like sexual harassment with sensitivity and speed is the most effective policy of the organization towards gender diversity whereas, according to females training and sensitization for managers on gender inclusion to avoid gender bias is the most effective program adopted by organizations towards promoting gender diversity.

6. Annova for difference in perception based on Age group with regards to obstacles to gender diversity within the organization

	Possible obstacles in managing Gender Diversity	20-30	30-40	40-50	50 above	F value	P Value
1	Patriarchal corporate culture	3.49	3.79	3.00	3.50	2.276	0.086
2	Inadequate information about existing diversity policies and practices	3.69	3.62	3.20	3.50	0.87	0.461
3	Perception, that women returning from maternity leave might not be able to balance work and caring responsibilities	3.33	3.28	3.40	4.00	0.209	0.89
4	Lack of flexible work solutions or inadequate work life balance priorities	**3.95**	**3.97**	**3.60**	4.00	**0.326**	**0.806**
5	lack of opportunities of critical work experience and responsibility for women employees	3.33	3.48	3.20	3.50	0.149	0.93
6	Less Initiatives to attract female tech talent in middle management level	3.03	3.24	3.20	4.00	0.413	0.744
7	Biased performance assessments and career progression decisions	2.95	3.45	3.30	3.50	0.856	0.468
8	Challenges of hiring given government regulations such as working hours, statutory maternity pay and parental leave	3.38	3.66	3.10	3.50	0.596	0.619
9	Lack of mentoring, networking & leadership development opportunities for female employees	3.38	3.17	3.00	**4.50**	**0.699**	**0.556**
10	Less Gender inclusion endorsement by CEO and Senior Management	3.62	3.14	2.90	3.50	1.462	0.232

Table 9: Annova for difference in perception among age groups

Interpretation:

As per the above table, respondents within the age group of 20 to 50 years mutually agree that Lack of flexible work solutions is the most important obstacle that needs to be tackled. However, respondents aged 50 years and above feel that lack of mentoring, networking & leadership development opportunities for female employees is the reason why gender diversity is lacking in organizations.

A) Annova for difference in perception based on Age group with regards to obstacles to gender diversity within the organization

	Effectiveness of various programs and practices	20-30	30-40	40-50	50 above	F value	P Value
1	Training and sensitization for managers on gender inclusion to avoid gender bias	3.85	3.59	4.30	2.50	2.593	0.059
2	Awareness and promotion of HR policies and programs available in organization to improve gender diversity	3.92	3.48	4.40	3.00	2.781	0.047
3	Flexible work arrangements, sabbatical leaves, Workplace Clubs, Health workshops to promote work life balance	3.72	3.52	4.20	**4.00**	1.117	0.347
4	Availability of active Women forums, diversity workshops and seminars at workplace	3.62	3.38	4.30	**4.00**	1.852	0.145
5	Initiatives to attract female tech talent in middle management level, through special "Female hiring drives" and special incentives to refer female candidates	3.54	3.55	3.80	3.00	0.335	0.8
6	Building an inclusive interview panel to foster fair assessment while hiring	3.62	3.45	4.10	2.50	1.39	0.252
7	Handling issues like sexual harassment with sensitivity and speed	**4.00**	**3.97**	**4.50**	**4.00**	**0.647**	**0.588**
8	More networking and mentoring opportunities being provided to young women employees interacting with senior women leadership	3.67	3.59	4.30	3.00	1.269	0.291
9	Collecting regular feedback through surveys and focus group discussions on gender diversity programs	3.51	3.48	3.90	2.00	1.935	0.131
10	Enough funding, involvement and commitment by top leaders by reserving quota in hiring, promoting, retaining and development	3.49	3.34	3.90	2.00	2.011	0.119

Table 10: Annova for difference in perception among age groups

Interpretation:

The above table clearly indicates a consensus of all age groups on the fact that the most effective program or policy adopted by organizations are in handling issues like sexual harassment with sensitivity and speed. Respondents aged above 50 also agree that flexible work arrangements and presence of active women forums and diversity programs are effective in promoting gender diversity.

Key Findings:

As per findings, both the genders feel that the biggest obstacle to gender diversity is lack of flexible work solutions
Another, Important obstacle being inadequate information about existing diversity policies and practices More female employees feel that lack of mentoring, networking & leadership development opportunities for female employees is the reason why gender diversity is lacking in organizations. Both the genders perceive, handling issues like sexual harassment with sensitivity and speed is the most effective policy of the organization towards gender diversity whereas,

According to females training and sensitization for managers on gender inclusion to avoid gender bias is the most effective program adopted by organizations towards promoting gender diversity.

Most of the female respondents also agree that flexible work arrangements and presence of active women forums and diversity programs are effective in promoting gender diversity.

Conclusion

The term 'glass ceiling' was first coined by Wall Street Journal 25 years back. Unfortunately, even today, the number of women in top management and leadership roles are not representative of the workforce population. Time alone is not the answer for gender inclusion.

This so called 'glass ceiling' is today a metaphor that describes an environment in organizations that does not create an ecosystem for women to grow into those leadership roles. There is no doubt that the Government has a very crucial role to play in this scheme of things. Most

countries reviewed in this study showed little or no improvement. However, India, Australia and Malaysia have recently seen regulatory action or governmental support for promoting board diversity

For a paradigm shift in organizational policies and practices following suggestions can be implemented

- Top management should understand business benefits of diversity and growing need to show the economic value of gender inclusion

- Create metrics to ensure women at all levels, like it is for all business processes for it to cascade and become part of the organization's thinking pattern.

- Organizations must also learn to recognize the unique aspirations of millennial women and their desire for flexible work timings and a better work/life balance.

- Indian organizations should actively promote more full time or part time jobs so that women do not fall out of talent pipeline.

- Mechanisms to to ensure that women are included in interview panels, are represented among candidates for job openings, both internal and external.

- We need to recognize the deep-rooted bias in performance assessments and career progression decisions, and to sensitize both men and women in the workplace, to ensure that this bias is minimized.

- Women need to be sensitive to use these benefits maintaining meritocracy and fighting against favoritism stereotypes.

- Indian women must become more open to being mentored by both men and women, from within and outside the organization, if they want to achieve their full potential.

Across the globe, there is growing global awareness of the need to increase gender diversity in the workforce. Corporate India is no exception, and there are some very noteworthy instances of women in leadership roles, but Grant Thornton's 'International Business Report' in March 2014 actually stated that the proportion of women in senior positions in the Indian workforce reduced from 19% in 2013 to 14% in 2014. Indian organizations have been rather slow to accept this new mantra.

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