Chapter V
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Does the formal entry of women into the strata of management in corporate sector signify emergent changes in structure of gender relations in workplace towards equality? Regrettably, the present empirical study proves otherwise. Though women tend to gain *formal* entry and position in the cadre of management / management strata, they do not seem to have secured a *real* position in the managerial power structure. Though such women have been vested with the trappings of managerialism, they nevertheless execute largely peripheral tasks. Men continue to dominate.

As the empirical evidence in this study demonstrates, a bulk of women managers are not, in reality, performing work of a managerial nature. Work of a managerial nature implies that it is based on specific professional skills in any of the functional areas of management - finance, personnel, technical, marketing and so on. Secondly, it involves decision making which is crucial in a significant way to the enterprise. Thirdly, a certain quantum of supervisory and control function must be exercised by a manager in his or her area over others which makes for the distinction between the 'manager' and the 'managed'.

When the above criteria is applied to women managers in the present study, it is seen that many would fail the test. More often, the designation of manager appears to be superfluous and cosmetic when compared to the actual work performed by the women managers. It can be observed that primarily, the ubiquitous problem in most corporate organizations is that power and authority do not flow down the hierarchy as to fervently desired by theory. In other words, there is a concentration of power with major or crucial decisions being taken by top management or some persons within that stratum. This is so both in 'family' owned business and in the so-called
professionally managed companies. In this scenario, being a woman manager is evidently an added or double handicap.

Therefore, if women managers (at the middle and upper middle levels), including men managers in many cases, do not perform work of a managerial nature but are deployed on tasks below their professional competence and skill, how can this phenomenon be conceptualized in theory? What does one designate such managers as and at what level of hierarchy in the social division of labor does one situate them? It is proposed, on the basis of the present study, to term such employees as 'managerial labor'.

The capitalist corporate structure masks itself with the ideology of equality and, objectivity, and boasts of performance being given more importance rather than sex, caste, class or race. But actually it vibrates with inequality. The patriarchal organizational structure based on gender leads to discrimination, job segregation and sexual power play. The linkages between the capitalist and patriarchal nature of the organization and other social institutions structured on capitalist-patriarchy such as family have brought women into the most vulnerable situation today.

There is a dearth of micro studies in the sociology of industrial relations pertaining to professionally trained employee women managers. There is evidently no special study on women managers in Hyderabad. The present study has made an attempt to obtain a holistic picture of the participation of women in management sector throwing light on the basic issues and problems of women managers in their everyday life in the male organizational set up. These experiences include a variety of socio-economic activities pertaining to their family, profession and grader.
The empirical context of this study has been to explore the operational mechanism of patriarchy in the capitalist organizational set up which leads to professional segregation, sexual discrimination and harassment of women managers working in various organizations. It also aimed . . to explore the lack of collective consciousness and collective organization and the diffuse manner in which women managers experience oppression. The findings are based on the data collected through a questionnaire, informal interviews, attending seminars and conferences pertaining to women managers, and by observation.

**Socio-Economic Background**

It has been found in previous studies that the white collar women belong to nuclear families in urban settings and are exposed to mass communication and the current information technologies. In the Indian context, the concentration of higher caste is found to be higher in white collar than in blue-collar jobs. Further, the restrictions imposed on working women were found to be more pronounced in white collar jobs (Sinha & Shashi Prabha, 1988). The present study has found that a majority of women managers hail from upper castes and from the nuclear families. But the trend shows that men with non-urban background and non-English medium background can also make it in the managerial position, whereas in case of women, they should have better schooling, education and exposure to the professional culture, to make it to the same level. Therefore; women seemingly have to work twice as hard as men to fulfill their aspirations.

Marriage is a very important phase for the Indian woman, which brings a total change in her way of life. Marriage is considered to be a permanent relationship. ‘Marriage is the root cause for all the subjugation’ is an understanding common to most feminists. Though this is not always obvious, yet man's domination and woman's subordination to man in the
name of compromises and adjustments, in the marital relation is a common phenomenon in various facets of life. This can be seen in the present study too. The data holds that though a few women managers have had a marriage of their own choice, a majority of them settled for arranged marriages. It is interesting to note that those who are supposed to take important decisions regarding profit and loss of the firm, labor problems and recruitment, sales and marketing, finance etc. have put the major decision of marriage into the hands of either family members or relatives.

From the empirical data, it is understood as regards maternity that 60% of women managers have worked through till the late months of their pregnancy and returned back to the work too early. Those who took longer leave found that they had been transferred to the different section where the work bore no relation to their professional status and skills. Thus the transfers can be considered to be of a punitive nature and oppressive in intent, an evidence of gender at work.

Though women are in full-time managerial profession and being one of the economic earners in the family or the sole earner in some cases, they could not escape or transcend the sexual division of labor at home such as childcare and domestic work totally or even partially. As it is considered as women's domain, men did little to reduce their workload. Even if they helped, they helped in areas which do not demean their male ego. Even during the sickness of a child, women managers rather than men had to be absent from work. Therefore a majority of women managers have limited the number of children to one or two, keeping in view their familial, professional and economic conditions and commitments. The child bearing, rearing and domestic work, (which is considered value less in exchange terms according to the feminists) holds women to the secondary status in the society as well as recognizes them as a secondary wage earner in the economic market. Men on the contrary are considered as the primary wage
As Sethi (1988) puts it rightly that, the employment of women does not necessarily lead to a change in the work patterns at home. The traditional role of a woman as home-maker and socializer of the young remains unaltered despite her new role as an economic earner. Also, the mere fact of woman making a financial contribution to the family income does not lead to a change in the existing role structures and ensuring power position within the family as manifested in her role in decision making. Husbands also continue to remain as main decision-makers. Therefore it is evident that women executives reach the organizations and take their respective jobs with additional family responsibilities as they are subordinated in the patriarchal family structure.

The present empirical study has examined the rationale of women managers for opting the managerial profession in spite of bearing so many difficulties at the domestic as well as social and organizational front Tilly and Scott (1978) had explained the push and pull factors which are influential in determining the demand for and supply of women work force in the labor market. The main reason to take up paid employment was the financial factor, which helps in supporting the family. The other major factor being the career advancement that many a women want to do justice for all the years of education and training they had. But many a respondents* first choice was not a managerial profession and in many cases women made their career choice in the later part of their education. This happens because of the myth that women do not fit into the demanding male oriented management profession which is full of uncertainties. There are also not many women managers to emulate in this profession. On the other hand, men tend to make conscious and premeditated choice of management as a career option.
Job Segregation

The complex institutions such as family, law, economy, culture tend to reinforce and support occupational segregation (Reagan and Blaxall: 1976). The data collected from the field shows that there is a clear cut job segregation in the managerial field. The job segregation has been taken place in horizontal as well as vertical levels. Around 30% of the women managers and only 2% of men were in the routine desk type of jobs which exclude women from the resources of power. In the departments of personnel management and industrial relations, and human resource development, a majority of women always performed the welfare functions like health or insurance of the employees or gave training to the employees whereas a majority of men have always dealt with industrial relations. This is because welfare is considered a safe and soft job. A meager percentage of women were observed in corporate planning, and finance. This is a clear evidence of horizontal segregation of women managers into certain occupational sections within management areas.

Job segregation and discrimination is very much obvious in the disparity in salaries given to women and men. Women managers' jobs, as observed from the data, are often given different job descriptions and titles for the jobs of equivalent nature and similar kind so that the lower pay for women can be justified. Women are given totally different kind of assignments compared to men in view of male fear of competition. The senior key positions are not generally offered to women even though women are remarkably similar to men in their educational levels, their year of experience and their abilities. Most of the women managers have been stagnated in the middle level positions with the same level of qualification and service. In this study, there are 48% of women and only 17% of men in junior level managerial positions whereas 35% of women and 40% of men are in middle level managerial positions. Finally, in the senior level, only
17% of women and a substantial 43% of men are present. Under representation in senior level and categorization of women into subordinate levels despite equal qualification and experience is an illustrative evidence of vertical segregation of women in the managerial job structure.

Job segregation has various facets. In the private sector it appears that policies for recruitment of women in the managerial levels is by and large arbitrary. After exploring sixty organizations, women managers were found only in around thirty six organizations in corporate Hyderabad and Secunderabad. While some organizations have clearly kept women out, others have taken them into more service and staff oriented functions rather than main line activities of the profession.

Savage and Witz (1992:16) observe that,

"The exclusion from organizational positions has more to do with their exclusion from the resources of power, whilst their inclusion in the corporate hierarchy has more to do with their subordination within the relational aspects of (male) dominance and (female) subordination"

Femininity, good looks and being attractive are all expected of women in some of the branches of managerial jobs, especially like marketing profession if they have to compete in the market. There is a clear discrimination in the recruitment patterns of the private sector industries, either service or production, on account of gender.

The study maintains that in the work relationships, a majority of men irrespective of their hierarchy have, relatively, more power than women managers in the organizations. Many a women (75%), irrespective of their position in the hierarchy, experienced superiority by men in whatever position they held. Patriarchal power relations are thus, interwoven into the very fabric of bureaucratic relations.
Decision Making

In the course of field work, it was observed that a substantial number of women managers were engaged in making pre-determined kind of decisions which are more or less structured and reasonably routine in nature and are based on prior information. But, women managers rarely take the strategic decisions, which determine the broad objectives of the organization, and their role is negligible in this regard.

The study holds that firstly, given the comparable experience, exposure etc, the number of women moving up to senior managerial level and their presence in that category who take crucial decisions is limited. Secondly, even in cases where they are positioned in the senior managerial strata, it is observed that they are not involved in the crucial decisions. Finally, even in cases where they are involved, their viewpoints are not taken seriously and are set aside. It is a clear evidence of the marginalization of women executives' involvement in the process of decision making. Hence not only the process is 'gendered', if we examine carefully, the content of decision making is also constantly informed and guided by the gender bias.

Leadership

The trends observed in the field are, firstly, the leadership of women managers in several organizations is limited to certain sectors like from office management, public relations, in-house maintenance etc with significant lack of presence in finance, manufacturing, corporate planning etc. Secondly, even in these sectors where the presence of women is significant, there is a large scale clustering of women in raddle level managerial positions where they become intermediates who act as a bridge between top management and the daily work schedule of the organization. This clustering is primarily because women managers are not provided with
structural as well as cultural avenues to reach the top. This has been presented in the discussion of structure of organization where it is shown that only 17% of women are in the senior and top management. Thirdly, the leadership is shaped on the lines of hierarchical relations of power based on gender discrimination. Finally, it is unfortunate to note that even in those sectors where there is significant presence of women managers as so-called leaders, the real power of decision making does not lie with them. The principles of management envisage the commensurate nature of power and responsibility. But, what is happening in practice is the responsibility of persuasion and of task accomplishment is being vested with the women managers without the attendant power of decision making. There is hardly any room for the leadership of women even in the so-called decentralized participatory new management model. All these trends are indicative of reinforcement of gendered managerial hierarchies and its operation even in those cases where women are seemingly involved as leaders and decision-makers. Thus contemporary management practices continue to reinforce patriarchy.

Thus those few women who take the leadership role are from viewpoint of 'relations of power' in organization definitely in subordinate positions. The liberal managerial thinking might hail their presence as leaders, but the ground reality is that women managers have more responsibility but less power, are stuck in middle management positions, and finally, a few are in decision making positions, take decisions, but not the crucial ones, it might be more appropriate to describe women managers, caught up in the paradoxical situation by terming them as 'gendered subordinate leaders'.

**Service Conditions**

Many an employer do not prefer women managers fearing their long absence with regard to their maternity leave and child care. But that is not
true. A majority of women managers (62%) did not take any break till date. Even those who have taken leave for the reasons of marriage, pregnancy and child-care, have limited their break for a short period. It was men who were highly mobile and moved from one organization to the other, taking the individual advantage of training and experience.

Job security is the basic factor everyone aspired to have. Ninety-six percent of women expressed that a peaceful organizational life where there is no threat to their personal life (sexuality) is their main concern. Many women managers expressed that they did not want to change a job, unlike men, given all the conditions were conducive to them. Even for those who wanted to change their job, the major factors behind this were either to have a career advancement or domestic reasons and finally organization related reasons. Some women managers who did not change their jobs, their non-mobility has led to a situation wherein they find themselves being taken for granted in their own respective organizations. Their promotion prospects suffered and their bargaining power has been severely affected.

Promotion is another factor where women are highly discriminated. The observation from the field holds that women managers are equally qualified as men are and equally competent along with men. But women are not always taken seriously for the senior positions. The promotion pattern is gendered and is different for men and women in different organizations. In spite of these obvious factors, employers are oblivious of the situation and prefer men alone though women are committed, systematic, dedicated and less corrupt.

From the empirical data, it is observed that a woman manager does two parallel kinds of labour - one for the formal organisation which is 'paid' and the other is domestic related which is 'unpaid'. Women work for more than 15 hours a day for job as well as domestic needs. Women work
overtime in the organisations which is not paid. Men also work for overtime in the offices but their salaries are better off when compared with women. The demands made out of patriarchal mode of production and reproduction in combination with capitalist mode of work in the organizations put women under considerable strain. The study shows that women are physically and mentally subjected to stress compared to men.

**Sexuality**

Sexuality at work place is a public issue. Sexuality assumes various forms of harassment, sexual joking and sexual abuse as a means of controlling women (Hearn and Parkin, 1987). The increase in sexual harassment, can be linked not only to a more sexually heterogeneous work place but also to the use of 'sexuality' to control women and to remind them of their ultimate position as sexual objects. This kind of separation to control women can be put in different ways, like denial of job based on gender, discrimination based on gender at different points of time, subjection to sexual harassment, sexual advances from men, employing feminine appeal as a code of conduct of the work structure, etc.

The study reveals that women often have to deal with the sexual harassment from men, in one form or the other, as expressed by 62% of women managers under study. It can take place in various forms like sexually colored remarks, a demand or request for sexual favours, physical contact and advance, verbal abuse and molestation. If things are too offensive and beyond their control, they have to seek the help of top management or quit the job. Whenever sexual harassment takes place, it is personal, individualistic in nature and invisible in its form, but the issue is very much public and it is an issue of power. The sexual harassment fas always
been hushed up as an individual phenomenon, in order to have a least effect on the organizational production or clientele relationship.

Sexual harassment is not taken with the seriousness that it deserves. In the words of V. R. Krishna Iyer (as quoted in a document of the National Council for Women, 1995: 83),

"...women's welfare is legislated galore but remain paper tigers since men are to implement it. That compounds the crime, since even policemen are if reports are correct, among criminals who endanger women. Even the laws are so lacunose that the judiciary, if objectively judged, will be found guilty".

Sexual harassment is deeply rooted in power relations between men and women, that are shaped along gender lines. This is a manifestation of the exploitative capitalist and oppressive patriarchal social structure.

The data has also focussed on those women managers who deny the existence of gendered inequality and discrimination in any way. In the words of a senior executive, "gender would not in any way effect our pattern of working and promotion prospects. Nor is there any harassment. It is an equal world nowadays". In the words of Karuna (1986), "women will fail to perceive discrimination even if it is practised against them so long as they are constrained by their socialisation and men will continue to view discrimination as natural and fair". Perhaps, this thinking is due to the rare possibility that some of the women managers were fortunate enough to be treated as equals in all spheres of life and without being discriminated. This is however a very individualistic way of thinking. It may be used by those who are blind towards the gendered nature of the organisations and those who do not want to see a change in women's traditional sexual division of labour. Such thinking therefore could be harmful to women's struggle for equality at the workplace particularly in the management cadre.
Some of the men managers expressed that there are no rules that discriminate women and it is always an equal world. That might be, to some extent, true but the obstacles lay not in rules but elsewhere. There was no rule, which discriminated on the basis of sex. But this was not to say that the rules favoured both sexes equally. The rules did not take into account the special needs or problems of women. Maternity leave is recognized as a right. Looking after children was assumed to be a woman's responsibility. That a woman's social and domestic responsibilities were greater than those of a man was a fact accepted without question. But rules, organizational work-styles and individual personalities lacked the imagination, flexibility and predisposition necessary to respond to these conditions. Taken together they all - consciously or unconsciously - worked against women (Joshi, 1989)

Unionism

It is observed from the study that women managers are the most unorganized and fragmented group and that they do not have much interaction with other employee managers within and outside the organizations. In Hyderabad, it is observed that there are no managerial unions which work for the managers, let alone for women managers. There are only managerial networks and academies which conduct seminars and training programs for the betterment of performance of the managerial employees but they do not take up the cause of managers or fight for them.

It is surprising to note from the study that one third of the women managers have no idea about unions and they don't warn to be a pan of a. One fourth of women managers told thai unions are not necessary for managers because they are not the blue-collar labour and they are not comparable with them. Most of the managers do not consider themselves to be a part of the
labour process even though they are simply 'hired labourers' and who can be fired just as any employee. They form the most vulnerable section of the hired labour. In case of women managerial labour, the need for some organised effort is even more pressing given the back drop of inherited inequalities, discrimination at work place and other factors discussed above.

Managerial labour, since it tends to consider itself as a part of, and identifies with capital, blocks itself from forming any kind of organized unions. It is interesting to observe thus how capitalism organizes various social groupings in such a manner that they tend to develop a distorted notion of their place in the capitalist relations of production, particularly in case of women managerial labour.

The study holds that, among other measures, collective mobilisation and articulation by women managers can be a significant intervention to subvert the patriarchy built into the system.