

WOMEN IN EDUCATION AND WORK LIFE

Editors : Dr. Himanshi Tiwari
Dr. Anna-Maija Lämsä
Dr. Rupert Beinhauer



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Preface

This book is the result of submissions to the International Rainbow Conference on Diversity, Inclusion and Gender Equity in Education and Working Life (IRC), which took place on 8-9 February 2022. The conference was part of the Erasmus+ project Rainbow, co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union (project number 598453-EPP-1-2018-1-AT-EPPKA2CBHE-JPA). The conference provided an interesting and stimulating learning experience and brought together academics, practitioners, and policy makers from many countries for fruitful discussions on the conference themes.

We invited academics, educators, policy makers and practitioners to provide a truly open and diverse forum, drawing on the interdisciplinary and diversity of those working on the topic worldwide to present and discuss their ideas, concerns, solutions, and innovations in relation to current and future challenges and trends. A total of 44 contributions on topics relevant to diversity, inclusion and gender justice were submitted. An overview of these contributions is available online. In this book, the authors who were willing to contribute, present their practices, cases, scientific contributions, and different methodologies. The commitment and contribution of all the authors of this book, and in particular our lead authors Jean Helms Mills and Albert J. Mills are greatly appreciated. All authors have provided their contributions for free which, together with the support of Erasmus+, enables us to disseminate the book and the knowledge it contains free of charge. Our thanks also go to the many people who, as members of the Steering, Scientific or Organising Committees, or as reviewers of the submissions for the book or conference, helped to make the conference and this publication possible.

A wide range of topics is covered in the following pages: Jean Helms Mills and Albert J. Mills discuss of critical sense making theory that has been established and developed by them. They highlight the use of this approach in studying gender in organizational life. Mira Karjalainen looks at the blurring boundaries of work during COVID-19 and analyses the impact of telework for different genders. Rupert Beinhauer's article gives an overview of the main developments in gender equality in Europe and India. Vaishali Devpura and Shibani Banerjee take an in-depth look at women's empowerment in India, addressing problems and perspectives. Ekaterina Demiankova and Sirje Ustav examine the entrepreneurial skills of female business students and analyse their potential as entrepreneurs. Uma Anurag and Simran Kaur provide an empirical approach to combining traditional and digital marketing to promote women artisans. Rahul

Gandhi Burra and Parul Kumari Bhati describe the case of the Self-Employed Women's Association in Ahmedabad and explore skill development, practices and promotion of inclusion. Shibani Banerjee describes the socio-psychological challenges faced by Indian women in balancing work and family during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, Anna-Maija Lämsä and Suvi Heikkinen examine women's career problems in management and discuss of solutions to the problems.

We, the editorial team, hope that you will enjoy the publication and find inspiration to your own work in the following pages.

Dr. Himanshi Tiwari
Dr. Anna-Maija Lämsä
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Making Sense of Sense Making: The Critical Sensemaking Method

Jean Helms Mills and Albert J. Mills

Professor Emerita, Saint Mary's University (Canada)

In this chapter we introduce the basic outline of Critical Sensemaking that was established and developed by Professors Jean Helms Mills and Albert J. Mills, in 2000. Critical Sensemaking (CSM) was developed out of Jean Helms Mills' critique of the work of Karl Weick for ignoring power and gender in developing a method for understanding how people come to make sense of reality. This was a critique that Weick generously agreed to on the back cover of Helms Mills' book, Making Sense of Organizational Change (2003), commenting that "Helms Mills strides into the growing conversation about organizational sensemaking and anchors it in the stirring changes at Nova Scotia Power, deepens it by showing what sensemaking reveals and conceals, and improves the conversation by closer attention to power, activities and rules." Weick concludes that this "is an important, nuanced, engaged contribution to organization studies." Interestingly, he does not go on to address the issue of gender and its impact on sensemaking.

The Trajectory of Sensemaking

In 1995, Karl Weick developed, what he called, "sensemaking" as an alternate approach for the understanding of the *process* of organizing. Instead of a focus on organizational outcomes, Weick's sensemaking provided insights into how individuals and organizations give meaning to events.

Brown, Stacey & Nandhakumar (2008: 1055) describe sensemaking and organization as essentially the same process. "To make sense is to organize, and sensemaking refers to processes of organizing using the technology of language – processes of labeling and categorizing for instance – to identify, regularize and routinize memories into plausible explanations...". Weick (1995: xi) views sensemaking as an alternative to conventional ways of looking at the process of organizing, describing it as "a set of ideas with organizing possibilities". Sensemaking provides a useful way of uncovering the social psychological *processes* that contribute to organizational outcomes, rather than focusing on the outcomes themselves. Sensemaking, thus, is about understanding how different meanings are assigned to the same event. As Weick explained, sensemaking is never-

ending (but ongoing) and each new sensemaking event is triggered by uncertainty or ambiguity, which causes us to find meaning. Because sensemaking occurs as a result of a shock, or break in routine, the study of sensemaking during or as a result of an organizational crisis offers particular insight into the processes involved.

Sensemaking Properties

According to Weick, we are constantly engaging in making sense of our environment through the influence of seven interrelated properties. In addition to the ongoing nature of sensemaking, these properties include identity construction, retrospection, focused on extracted cues, driven by plausibility, enactive of the environment and social.

Grounded in Identity Construction

According to this property, who we are and what factors have shaped our lives influence how we see the world. Our identity is continually being redefined as a result of experiences and contact with others, for example, parents, friends, religion, where we went to school, where we work and what type of job we do all affect how we view certain situations.

Retrospective Sensemaking

We rely on past experiences to interpret current events. Thus, sensemaking is a comparative process. In order to give meaning to the 'present' we compare it to a similar or familiar event from our past and rely on the past event to make sense..." (Brown & Jones, 1998: 74). For example, a woman may come to be hired as an engineer and this could be a shock for her male co-workers. To make sense of this 'shocking' situation, the men might draw on their experience of only ever working with men. In the process the men may reinforce old discriminatory views of engineering unless their view of the past as 'normal' is challenged through an examination of their sense of the past.

Focused on and by Extracted Cues

The sensemaking process involves focusing on certain elements, while completely ignoring others, in order to support our interpretation of an event. Since sensemaking is retrospective, past experiences, including rules and regulations, dictate what cues we will extract to make sense of a situation. For example, to return to our engineering case, the male engineers may focus on a female engineer's dress while ignoring the fact that she has come to work with a set of engineering tools.

Driven by Plausibility Rather than Accuracy

This refers to the fact that we do not rely on the accuracy of our perceptions when we make sense of an event. Instead, we look for cues that make our sensemaking seem

plausible. In doing so, we may distort or eliminate what is accurate and potentially rely on faulty decision making in determining what is right or wrong. Plausibility is one of the key properties in Critical Sensemaking because for something to change it needs to attain the status of plausibility. In our engineering example the hiring of a large number of female engineers at one time may make it seem a plausible thing to do rather than employing only a small number of women at any one time. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) calls it a “critical mass” for change where female employment reaches and exceeds one-third of the employee total.

Enactive of the Environment

Sensemaking is about making sense of an experience within our environment. Thus, our sensemaking can be either constrained or created by the very environment that it has created. Similar to a self-fulfilling prophecy, this property maintains that the environment that has been created by the sensemaker, reinforces his or her sense of credibility. For example, a person may work to ensure that women are not employed in engineering. He may do this by attempting to show that a woman is not capable of doing engineering and so encourages other not to hire women in engineering. This may create a situation where there are no female engineers but this may be due to the fact that they have been excluded from engineering not because they are incapable of learning to be engineers.

Social Sensemaking

This property acknowledges that the sensemaking process is contingent on our interactions with others, whether physically present or not. As well, an organization’s rules, routines, symbols and language will all have an impact on an individual’s sensemaking activities and provide routines or scripts for appropriate conduct. But when routines or scripts do not exist, the individual is left to fall back on his or her own ways of making sense. For example, a male engineer may personally feel that women can be engineers but when he shared this idea with his colleagues he may be convinced by sheer numbers of people against the idea so he begins to feel that the idea of female engineers is somehow abnormal.

Ongoing Sensemaking

The process of sensemaking is a sequential process that never stops because sensemaking flows are constant. Although this seems to contradict the statement that sensemaking is provoked by shocks or ambiguity, Weick maintains that we are constantly making sense of what is happening around us but that we isolate moments and cues from this continuous sensemaking to make sense of the current situation, which we may be ‘forced’ to attend to because of a break in the routine. In our engineering example, we might find that the employment of a female engineer is a ‘shock’ to those involved,

encouraging those involved to try to renew their sense of a situation or decide to seek out other senses of the situation.

Not All Properties are Equal

Initially, Weick claimed that the inter-related properties were equally important to the sensemaking process, although one or another could be more dominant according to the sensemaking event. More recently, he has acknowledged some of the criticisms and limitations of sensemaking, including the suggestion that some properties may be more pivotal than others (Weick, Sutcliff, & Obstfeld, 2005). Take, for example, identity work, or identity construction. Simone de Beauvoir (1952) has long contended that while men experience their existential sense as primarily human, as sensemakers, the existential experience of women is viewed primarily as essentially female and then as female sensemakers. For de Beauvoir women are cast as the second sex.

Towards Critical Sensemaking

It is the focus on individual identity in the context of social and on-going interactions that offers much in the way of providing a way of reinserting agency in organizational studies (Nord & Fox, 1996) and for bringing identity work to the fore as a critical way of understanding the relationship between sensemaking and gender. It makes an “important contribution to our understanding of everyday life in organizations” by providing an “ethnomethodology of organizing” (Mills, 2008).

Positivist Grounding

The strengths of the notion of sensemaking properties are, however, limited by Weick’s paradoxical treatment of sensemaking as drawing on interpretive insights that are often times presented as grounded in a more positivist notion of epistemological certainty, i.e., that the sensemaking process can be somehow seen as grounded (or groundable) in scientific knowledge. Weick’s approach is also limited by an under focus on issues of power, knowledge, structure, and past relationships.

Dealing with Structure, Power, Knowledge

A way to overcome some of these issues was to incorporate elements of Unger’s (1987b, 1987a) notion of formative context, and to explain in more detail the social elements that affect the process of change and the background factors that influenced sensemaking. To account for influences at the organizational level, Helms Mills (2003) turned to Mills and Murgatroyd’s (1991) concept of organizational rules to explain how established rules of behaviour are mediated by individuals, according to their own sensemaking and how they influence the process of sensemaking. In that way, rules provide a link

between behaviour and the creation and maintenance of organizational culture (Helms Mills, 2003). In later iterations the work of Foucault (1979, 1980) was drawn on to explain how the possibilities of thought are influenced by ‘knowledge’ (Helms Mills & Mills, 2000).

The first issue of epistemological grounding raises the problem of ‘epistemological circularity’ whereby sensemaking seeks to problematize the basis of knowledge production through reference to “a presupposed knowledge of the conditions in which knowledge takes place” (Johnson & Duberley, 2000: 3). In other words, ‘explanation’ of how certain knowledge is produced (e.g., a seemingly natural sense of organization) is grounded in reference to a more or less incontrovertible knowledge base – in this case, sensemaking. But, as Johnston and Duberley (2000: 4) contend, this is a circular argument that raises questions about accounts of sensemaking that do not take into account the researcher’s own imposed sense on the observations involved.

CSM addresses this problem in at least three ways: first, by seeking a triangulation of methodologies (interpretism, poststructuralism, and critical theory) to provide different frames of reference that can simultaneously ground and problematize – what we call – critical sensemaking’s knowledge claims; second, by highlighting the heuristic as opposed to scientific character of the social psychological properties of sensemaking; and third, following Johnson and Duberley (2000), by taking a “consciously reflexive” (p. 4) approach that identifies the impossibility of “coming to a foundational set of epistemological standards... while [maintaining] consistency with regard to the epistemological assumptions” we do deploy (p.177). To quote Jenkins (1999, p.1), “nothing is given to a gaze, but rather is constituted ‘in meaning’ by it.”

Moving to the issue of context, structure and the discursive nature of sensemaking we turn, respectively, to the work of Unger, Mills, and Foucault. Here, among other things, we seek to make sense of why some language, social practices and experiences become meaningful for individuals, and others do not. Since sensemaking happens within a social context and as an ongoing process, and it also occurs within a broader context of organizational power and social experience, the process of critical sensemaking may be most effectively understood as a complex process that occurs within, and is influenced by, a broader social environment.

Identity construction is arguably a key component in the process not just because it influences individual sensemaking, but also because it influences how individuals understand the other six “properties.” Sensemaking describes a process of identity construction whereby individuals project their identities into an environment and see it reflected back.

Critical sensemaking shifts focus to how organizational power and dominant assumptions privilege some identities over others and create them as meaningful for individuals. As sensemaking is not a linear process, analysis does not happen in a particular sequence. Although some properties may become more visible from time to time, the

sensemaking properties may also influence individual sensemaking simultaneously. For example, the property of enactment may become visible in a particular sensemaking process, but that same enactment of meaning may influence the plausibility of other actions, and simultaneously the construction of individual identity.

Formative Context

Unger's notion of formative context serves to draw attention to the broader institutional (e.g., TQM, Employment Equity) and imaginative practices (e.g., efficient organization) at work, within which sense is made of events. Unger's notion of formative context serves to draw attention to the broader *institutional* (e.g., TQM, Employment Equity) and *imaginative* practices (e.g., efficient organization) at work, within which sense is made of events. These institutional and imaginative arrangements constitute important stabilizing aspects of the "formative contexts" in which social struggles are played out and constrained. In the words of Blacker, 1992, "As conflicts are temporarily resolved, solutions become supported by particular organizational and technological styles, by emerging group interests, patterns of privilege, and the ways in which a basic grammar of social interactions becomes articulated in official dogmas. The imaginative schemas of participants interact with the institutional frameworks in which they operate" (p. 279).

Rules Theory

Rules theory (Mills and Murgatroyd, 1991) offers an explanation for the consequences interpretation has on the behaviour and enactment of sensemaking, and subsequently the culture of the organization.

A Rules Perspective

What is still missing from the process is an understanding of the influence of structure (particularly structured/sedimented expectations) on the process of sensemaking. The work of Mills (1988) & Mills and Murgatroyd (1991) fills in this gap. Rules refer to the configuration of written/unwritten, moralistic/legalistic/normative, and formal/informal "phenomena whose basic characteristic is that of generally controlling, constraining, guiding and defining social action".

Discourse

Foucault's notion of discourse provides an understanding of how sensemaking is informed/grounded in power/ knowledge. While discourse refers to a set of powerful ideas and associated-interrelated practices that are experienced as 'knowledge'.

Applications of Critical Sensemaking

Typically, an investigation of sensemaking processes would start from, or at least relate to, an important organizational event. This event might be the arrival of a new CEO, a merger, layoffs, expansion, or anything that could have disrupted the existing organizational routines. These sensemaking triggers, known as ‘organizational shocks’ (Weick, 1995) create ambiguity in the organization and force individuals to make sense of things differently.

Methodological Implications

Among the methodological approaches to the application of CSM researchers have used in-depth interviews (Thurlow & Helms Mill, 2009), focussing on the narratives that people generate during a period of change; content analyses of corporate statements in defining periods of organizational change (Helms Mills); understanding the role of media in constructing a sense of a situation during periods of disaster (O’Connell & Mills, 2003); Critical discourse analysis (Thurlow, 2007), examining dominant discourses in a period of change management; and archival research (Mills & Helms Mills, 2004), analyzing documents over time and how managers attempted to make sense of changing gendered relations.

Conclusion

As has contended elsewhere, a critical version of sensemaking has the potential to strengthen the notion of agency in critical management studies (CMS), helping CMS scholars to “understand how structuration is structured; discourse is discursive; postcolonialism is posted; isomorphism morphs; techniques of the self are technically possible; gendering is gendered; local is localized; or praxis is practiced” (Mills 2008, p. 29).

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Blurring the Boundaries of Work during COVID-19: Teleworking and Gender

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Abstract

The boundaries of work are blurred in many ways in modern working life and special ways during the COVID-19 era. In addition to time and place, the study examines the blurring of work boundaries regarding emotional, aesthetic, spiritual, and social labour with a survey conducted in a consulting company operating in Finland (N 87). The study analyzes, from an intersectional perspective, the issues of blurring the boundaries of work for different genders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study found that emotional labour is gendered in such a way that women place empathy and men in the encounters of working life. Aesthetic labour has changed tremendously with both genders due to teleworking, but the ways of aesthetic labour have become more gendered. Spiritual labour or different mental techniques are practiced fairly evenly, but where men state that they do not practice any technique, women experience a bad conscience for not doing it. Research shows how blurring and drawing the boundaries of work in teleworking is not genderless, but gender is reflected in many ways in experts' perceptions of teleworking.

Introduction

The past 2 years have changed working life, especially the working life of knowledge workers. Spring 2020 forced all those telecommuting whose work could be done away from work. In Finland, this meant more than a million employees (The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2021). Telework affects people in different ways, depending on their educational and professional background, as well as other factors (such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity, and place of residence). Studies on the effects of mass compulsory teleworking have already been published, but there are only a few studies on the gender effects of the blurring of the boundaries of mass teleworking caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Finland (Karjalainen, 2021; Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta et al., 2021). This article scrutinises the topic with the help of a survey of employees of a knowledge work company operating in Finland.

Teleworking or multi-place work is a broad-based new form of doing work, albeit familiar in expert work. Telework has grown strongly over the past 10 years: even before the corona pandemic, less than half of Finns worked remotely and the share of senior employees was almost 60 per cent (Sutela et al., 2019; The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2021). On the other hand, only 4 per cent of wage earners had their main place of work at home (Sutela et al., 2019). The pandemic pushed almost half of the wage earners to telework mainly at home or the cottage, thus radically changing the way work is done in Finland (The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2021). Mandatory teleworking forced organisations to review their policies and enable a wider range of employees to work from home. Even before the corona pandemic, research has shown that teleworking is often more effective than at the work office and that many employees telework to get work done without interruptions (Niemistö et al., 2017).

European studies show that domestic work and care during the pandemic have fallen on women, especially mothers (Hennekam and Shymko, 2020; Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir, 2020; Manzo and Minello, 2020). In Finland, equality is often taken for granted and gender mainstreaming is unnecessary (Saari, 2013). However, there is no reason for this, as women regularly do more housework in Finland (Känsälä and Oinas, 2016). The study examines how the boundaries of work move, blur, and become gendered in corona-era telework.

Gender and Work Boundaries

The corona pandemic has accelerated many trends in working life. For example, the nature of work and with it its boundaries have changed in Finnish working life in recent decades, but the mass transition to teleworking made these changes visible. In knowledge work, in particular, this change has been highlighted as the specialised and highly trained workforce of experts and the knowledge they manage to play a significant role (Alvesson, 2004). The importance of individual and organisational flexibility is increasingly emphasised in autonomous knowledge work and one of its key features is the blurring of work boundaries. The teleworking caused by the corona pandemic put organisations and workers in a new position in terms of work flexibility and job boundary practices.

The boundaries of the work can be defined in many ways. One aspect is the distinction between work and the rest of life, where the boundary between them can be seen as flexible or inflexible depending on how much it is possible to move across the border (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Companies have varying practices for the flexibility of work boundaries, in addition to which corporate culture influences how the boundaries between work and the rest of life are understood and how flexible an individual perceives their room for maneuver (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Kossek and

Lautsch, 2012). At the same time, organisations often assume their operations are based on gender neutrality, where the most qualified individuals are rewarded, and overlook the inequalities typical of masculine career structures (Geiger and Jordan, 2014). Flexibility is often seen as synonymous with over-long workdays, placing employees with different life situations and with different caring responsibilities in an unequal position (Bathini and Kandathil, 2019). Also in knowledge work, the blurring of work boundaries is linked to gendered organisational hierarchies and multi-level injustices in organisations that arise from different starting points and characteristics of individuals (Acker, 1990; Hearn and Louvrier, 2014; Lutz et al., 2011).

The individual's ways of perceiving the boundaries between work and other life and different work and life situations vary, as does the willingness to mix or separate areas of work and other life (Moazami-Goodarzi et al., 2015). These perceptions and desires also change at different stages of the career as well as in different life situations (Desrochers and Sargent, 2003; Ford and Collinson, 2011). The blurring of the boundaries between work and other life affects how work and other life are defined and separated (Fleming and Spicer, 2004). In Finland, the responsibility for caring for a family is still borne more often by women than men (Känsälä and Oinas, 2016). Thus, in addition to the support of the organisation and the supervisor, the opportunities for women with families to advance in their careers are still strongly influenced by the support of a potential spouse (Heikkinen et al., 2014).

The stretching of work boundaries is reflected in various ways, such as the excessive flexibility required of employees due to busy and excessive work, as well as the leakage of work to other spheres of life and decentralisation over time and space (Correl et al., 2014; Karjalainen et al., 2016; Niemistö et al., 2017). On the other hand, the development of information technology and teleworking have been found to improve job satisfaction (Castellacci and Viñas-Bardolet, 2019). According to the Working Conditions Barometer conducted in August-September 2020, as many as 92 per cent of Finns who worked remotely were satisfied with the smooth running of telework during the corona situation. The survey was conducted at the same time as the survey that created the blurring boundaries of the work on which this study is based.

The pace of modern working life consumes many. According to the Working Conditions Barometer, more and more wage earners find their work mentally difficult and almost half experience harmful stress at work; for example, 12 per cent of wage earners and 37 per cent of employees are always or often experiencing mental fatigue (The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2020). In 2018, 15 per cent of wage earners felt a serious risk of burnout at work and 43 per cent thought so from time to time. The threat of burnout has become more gendered and about two-thirds of women are at risk of severe burnout and about half of the men (Sutela et al., 2019).

Blurring the Boundaries of Work in Teleworking

The boundaries of work are blurred in many ways in modern working life and special ways during the corona era. In addition to the blurring of the time and place of work, workflows into new areas of life. The boundaries of work become blurred regarding emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), aesthetic labour (Caven et al., 2013), spiritual labour (Karjalainen, 2022), and social labour (Fleming, 2009). This blurring of the work boundaries is typical for demanding expert work.

Emotional labour refers to the utilisation of emotions in the modern service economy. According to Hochschild (1983), in emotional labour, employees are expected to display and use a certain kind of emotion that is appropriate to implement the organisation's strategy. Emotional labour can vary from superficial to profound emotional work, as well as from customer situations to feelings about the work itself (Miller et al., 2007). In telework, emotional labour can be expected to change as encounters move to different digital platforms.

In aesthetic labour, the employee has to comply with holistic standards of appearance and appearance in the aesthetic work included in his or her work input (Caven et al., 2013). At the societal level, aesthetic labour can be linked to the capitalist, neoliberal, and social discourses in which the body is viewed as a commodity (Esposito, 2015). The demands of taking care of oneself, such as well-being (Cederström and Spicer, 2015), being fit (Huzell and Larsson, 2012), and demonstrating well-being and being in good shape (Warhurst and Nickson, 2009) have been identified as part of the work. Self-care related to working life is considered to include the preservation of personal well-being and the effort to make the most efficient use of oneself and one's resources (Bressi and Vaden, 2017). Teleworking can be seen as changing aesthetic labour, as there is no visual context for teleworking and online conferencing requires different types of aesthetic work.

The concept of spiritual labour describes harnessing an employee's spirituality as part of work (Karjalainen, 2022). In spiritual labour, the organisation sees the spirituality of its employees as part of its resources, or the spirituality is utilised in customer work. Spirituality becomes a new task that must be handled excellently, and failure to do so results in a bad conscience and a sense of inadequacy. Previous research has found that women saw mindfulness exercises as an improvement in endurance or effectiveness (Hyvönen and Karjalainen, 2020). Their resources were seen as an organisational asset and this initial assumption was not called into question. Spiritual labour in teleworking highlights the dimensions of spirituality and the organisation's assumptions about what belongs to the sphere of work.

Another emotion-based recent research concept, social labour helps to look at friendships and networking in the context of demanding expert work (Fleming, 2009; Anderson et al., 2016). Personal friendships and networks are instrumentalised and

become part of work. Creating and maintaining work-related friendships and networks in teleworking raises new questions about the nature of both social labour and friendships and networks.

Data and Methodology

The article is based on a research project that examines the blurring of the boundaries of work of professionals during the corona era. This article focuses on a survey conducted in one work organisation on the blurring of work boundaries in teleworking. Solve (pseudonym) is an information work company operating in Finland that specialises in business-to-business consulting, especially in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and various types of outsourcing services. In the findings section, these are referred to as ICT, outsourcing, and others. The Company has a few hundred employees, all highly educated. The Company offers its clients business consulting in several sectors, some of which have traditionally been male-dominated, some female-dominated, and some equal. In Finland, when the labour market is vertically segregated (Palencia-Esteban, 2019), Solve is a suitable organisation for the survey, as its employees are evenly composed of women and men.

In March 2020, the organisation relocated virtually all of its employees to teleworking. Prior to that, telecommuting had been an exception and employees had been assumed to work primarily on either the organisation's or customers' premises. Thus, teleworking rights were extended to everyone at once, and the organisation found that jobs that were still considered necessary to be delivered in the workplace a moment ago were not. All meetings were transferred to digital platforms, and almost no one visited the workplace, although it was possible in principle.

The Survey was conducted in September 2020. A link to the anonymous survey was sent to all staff and just over 40 per cent responded to the survey by the deadline. At the time of the Survey, the employees had been working remotely for 6-7 months and there was no end date. The Survey was answered by 87 employees, of whom 30 were men and 57 were women, no respondents were choosing non-binary or omitting the information. The number of employees was fairly even in all age groups and taking into account the nature of the consulting industry: 18 people aged 20-29 years, 36 people aged 30-39 years, 25 people aged 40-49 years, and 8 people aged 50+ years.

The Survey asked open questions about the blurring of work boundaries related to telework:

Tell us about your teleworking day; What do you miss from working life before the corona crisis; Has the corona era brought anything good to your work life; How do you utilise your emotions at work; How do you maintain your networks and friendships remotely; How, because of work, taking care of your appearance has changed during the corona period; Do you use any technology to succeed/

thrive at work? (e.g. mindfulness, meditation, mental exercises, or other); How the corona crisis is shaping expert work; Other thoughts on the boundaries of work and telework during the corona period. Except background questions (gender, age, and industry), the questions did not refer to gender or caring responsibilities, to avoid directing the answers towards gender reflections. The data were analyzed by thematic content analysis, which was theoretically informed (Braun and Clarke 2006; Guest et al., 2012). The thematic analysis addresses the attitudes behind the answers that appear in the lives of the interviewees (Bacchi, 2005). This provides access to established ways of meaning that the interviewees take for granted and their conscious commitment to certain values and goals.

Findings

The blurring of the boundaries between work and other life and the relationship between work and care have a decisive impact on the careers and coping of many. In telework, in particular, the boundaries of work become blurred. When work is done at home, the beginning and especially the end of a working day may become blurred. Because the boundaries of work slip more easily than usual in teleworking, it requires organisations and employees to learn and manage new skills and practices. Many were now, for the first time, thinking about the boundaries of their work and how to manage them. Each respondent contemplated the blurring boundaries of telework concerning time and space, although this was not directly inquired about in the Survey:

Teleworking has been a good thing for everyday life. The problem, however, is that when there is enough work for every moment during the day, it is often difficult to draw the line between work and leisure. Unfortunately, work will often dominate leisure time as well. –female, 30-39 years old, no care responsibilities. (8)

Teleworking has brought a lot of flexibility to everyday life but also a lack of time management. New routines need to be learned for remote work so that even some sort of boundary between leisure and work is maintained and does not overload oneself. - female, 30-39, no care responsibilities. (16)

Sometimes it would also be more comfortable not to have to work at home all the time. That the computer could be left in the office and I could be completely free after a working day without the possibility to open the computer. – female, 30-39, no care responsibilities. (69)

Regarding the blurring of work boundaries, issues related to time and place were highlighted as the organisation moved virtually all of its employees to telecommuting. In Solve, the workforce was instructed to work remotely and the work was done mainly at home, a few respondents had a place to work in a cottage or their old hometown. According to *preliminary* data from the latest Working Conditions Barometer (The

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2021), the corona situation has increased the workload of almost a third of wage earners, and the results show that the workload has increased the most among women, white-collar workers, and municipal wage earners. The length of the working day for employees at Solve increased by 29 per cent, it was the same length for 57 per cent, and 14 per cent reported a shortening of their working day, and a few per cent more men reported a longer working day than women did.

There was no difference between the genders in the descriptions of the employees about the course of their teleworking day. If the answers had been listed without gender, the reader would not have been able to deduce it from the answers.

I start really early because I work at home and it doesn't take time to go to work, the mind is calmer because the blood pressure doesn't rise during rush hour driving. I work until the lunch usually without a break but I like a longer lunch break and I go for about a 10-minute walk during lunch hour which is really good and I get to straighten the body for a while. The afternoon often goes with meetings. I end my working day at about 5 pm but sometimes I continue in the evening after playing sports. I feel better because I don't spend time travelling or sitting in traffic jams. I can also rhythm the day more easily because I am not dependent on, e.g. use of office facilities because I work at home – female, 40-49, no care responsibilities. (4)

Teleworking days are great at home. Only the training of the new staff has suffered a little during the corona period. I would rather be present to talk and guide them to a new job. – male, 40-49, no care responsibilities. (5)

Similarly, no gender differences were found in the questions on what the respondent missed about working life before the corona crisis and whether the corona era had brought something good into their work life. There was also no difference in the reporting of the blurring of the boundaries of work due to the corona pandemic, but there were gender differences between work and other life, especially in care and housework, and in other dimensions of blurring of the boundaries of work.

Care and Housework

Teleworking is also a gender and care issue. Care responsibilities affect teleworking and put families, and especially parents of young children, in a more difficult position than many other groups. The study highlighted the strong change in the daily lives of caregivers with the transition to teleworking. Men mentioned family responsibilities relatively more often than women in their responses, mainly in the form of fetching children to and from kindergarten. Men emphasised sociality towards children or lack thereof:

Basically, children can now be seen during the day when they come from school. In practice, it hardly materialises because I am so caught up in meetings. – Male, 40-49, school-age children (36)

I wake up late and eat breakfast normally. I work at my remote workstation, where a child often harasses or makes noise if not in daycare. – Male, 40-49, a small child (12)

The duration of working days can also be considerably more flexible. You do not have to leave at a certain time just because of the kindergarten schedules. I am not anymore in such a rush. – Male, 40-49, small children (17)

Teleworking brought children closer and granted the flexibility to family life, at least on the surface level. Yet there were gender differences although women also referred to childcare, they talked more about men about cooking and laundry.

Teleworking saves time because time is not spent on business trips. Even during a teleworking day, you can easily do laundry. - Female, 30-39, no care responsibilities. (9)

At home, work goes as smoothly as in the office, but at home, it is easy to do other things (e.g. housework and cooking) and the days go by. Breaks are also forgotten and you find that you sometimes work in too long sections. – Female, 30-39, no care responsibilities (16)

Most praised the fact that telecommuting had brought unhurriedness to the day because commuting to kindergarten and work had ceased. There was, however, a harsher side in the stories of women in particular. Especially in the families of two working parents, the situation had sometimes become difficult:

From the perspective of a family with children, I can say that this time has been very challenging and has really gone to the limits of exhaustion when kindergarten-age children have been home and both parents are doing demanding expert work. I have worked from morning to night and even on weekends to get all the work done, but there has not been much time to take holidays. There has been no relief from the employer. There is no childcare available anywhere and you have to manage to do it yourself. I have to say that a lot is required of experts at this time. – Female, 30-39, small children (76)

Work ergonomics are poor. I work on my laptop either on the couch or at the dining table. There is no separate screen available. Our study is used by my spouse who also teleworks. When the kindergartens were closed in the spring and the children were at home, I worked in the sauna as it was the quietest place in the house. – Female, 30-39, small children (35)

One of the obstacles in women's career development in particular is the workload of care responsibilities. When looking at well-being at work, gendered care has a decisive effect on participation in working life, and especially on women's career opportunities (McKie et al., 2013). Care is also a career issue – women's career development is hampered by unequal structures in working life. The unequal distribution of care reduces men's opportunities as fathers and in care in general, which in turn has negative effects on, among other things, families, relationships, and child-parent relationships (Kangas et al., 2017).

Emotional Labour

According to Arlie Hochschild (1983), the modern service economy requires the utilisation of emotions and can be equated with the exploitation of manual labour in factories. Employees are expected to display and use a certain kind of emotion that is appropriate to implement the organisation's strategy. Although the majority of the literature deals with the emotional labour of service professionals such as waiters or salespeople, in demanding expert work, emotional labour is often more subtle, but also more demanding, as colleagues and customers need to be assured of reliability, presence, interest, and long-term commitment to. The challenges of emotional labour in teleworking were highlighted:

Interpreting others and "reading" emotions is also difficult when not seeing and experiencing the other person normally. I don't think a video connection will replace this, because watching a picture is somehow weird, among other things (presentation, browsing documents, etc.). – male, 30-39, no care responsibilities, (15)

I try to maintain a positive atmosphere by always communicating kindly and investing in the tone of communication. I find it even easier to give feedback remotely. – male, 40-49, small children, (17)

Emotional labour can range from superficial to profound emotional labour, as well as from customer situations to feelings about the work itself (Miller et al., 2007). Several complained that there was no opportunity to discuss emotions at work:

Q: Do you take advantage of emotions at work?

A: Hardly, there is no place for feelings. – Woman, 40-49, no care responsibilities (4)

There is no talk of emotions. We are talking about achievement and output. The same mentality as before telecommuting. – Male, 20-29, no care responsibilities (29)

Some took advantage of the technology that telecommuting brings to express the desired emotional state:

Through teams, voice is of great importance. You can tell if the person is calm/tired/happy, etc. Of course, the sound can also be slightly modified to sound what you want. – Female, 30-39, no care responsibilities (48)

There was a difference in the answers as to how the emotional labour was described and in which contexts of meaning it was placed (Bacchi, 2005). Both women and men reported doing emotional labour, but women put a little more emphasis on empathy in emotional labour while men talked about encouraging co-workers by a pep talk.

Aesthetic Labour

Aesthetic labour constructs a certain kind of image and social status, and thus it reproduces intersectional power relations (Mears, 2014). In aesthetic labour, employees are expected to dress and construct their appearance in accordance with the guidelines and organisational culture provided by the management (Caven et al., 2013). Through the commercialisation and objectification of the physicality of employees, employees have become part of the aesthetics of the organisation (Witz et al., 2003), leading to certain criteria for the aesthetics of employees (Warhurst and Nickson, 2009). These criteria faced a significant change after employees ended up working remotely for a long time. As aesthetic labour is strongly gendered, the change was especially great for women:

Q: How has caring for your appearance changed during the pandemic?

A: Quite radically, make-up and the choice of clothes are completely skipped for the days when I was just working at home. (Teams in remote meetings don't have to keep the video on, and hardly anyone stops). - female, 30-39, no care responsibilities, (16)

When I work from home, I dress mostly comfortably, I don't do makeup, etc., while I would always dress neatly for the office and wear makeup every day. I always hope that if, for example, a camera needs to be on in a meeting, this will be announced in advance. Even then, I mainly wonder about what is shown on the camera (e.g. the hair must be done only in the front). - female, 30-39, no care responsibilities, (40)

Women report that time and money were saved when they did not have to get to work in the morning. Men also reported a reduction in aesthetic labour, especially for shaving and hairdressing:

Dress and personal hygiene will certainly not be given the same attention as before. Beard grows and collared shirts and suits stay in the closet :) - male, 30-39, small children, (59)

Although make-up and other dressing up had been significantly reduced, other criteria creeping into the aesthetics of the workplace, such as physical fitness (Huzell and Larsson, 2012), had not been forgotten. An expert's fit body is believed to demonstrate

their motivation, self-discipline, responsibility, willingness, and ability to work (Haynes, 2012). Many people now said they were investing in fitness:

I care less about my appearance and more about my health. I don't wear makeup during the day or wear business clothes. I always wear a tracksuit. This brings a lot of extra time to the day. Despite this, my appearance has by no means "crumbled" but on the contrary, I spend more time on exercise and wellbeing, only the useless work on appearance has been left out. – Female, 30-39, no care responsibilities (27)

The answers reflect the internalisation of aesthetic labour. Well-being (Cederström and Spicer, 2015) and healthy people are thought to be able to perform the tasks assigned to them – this idea is also entrenched in management ideology (Cederström and Grassman 2008) and is reflected in recruitment, selection, and productivity decisions (Huzell and Larsson 2012).

Spiritual Labour

Previous research has found (Karjalainen, 2022; Karjalainen et al., 2019) that spiritual labour and various mental exercises become gendered in the context of working life. This is also reflected in the responses on teleworking and work boundaries. To the question, 'Do you use any technology to survive/thrive at work? (e.g., mindfulness, meditation, mental exercises, or other)', the men replied mostly simply by stating that they were either practicing some technique or that they were not doing any exercises. Women, on the other hand, fostered a feeling of inadequacy:

Sometimes meditation and TRE [trauma releasing exercises] should be practiced as I have studied them. – Female, 40-49, no care responsibilities (53)

No, but I should. – Female, 20-29, no care responsibilities (58)

I don't, although it would certainly do me good. – Female, 40-49, no care responsibilities (75)

Feelings of inadequacy followed women, regardless of whether they did well-being exercises or not:

I should, but I don't take advantage of these. I participate in meditative yoga once a week. – Female, 20-29, no care responsibilities (45)

I don't practice, but maybe I should. I have tried to take more exercise in my daily routine and therefore also body care. – Female, 30-39, no care responsibilities, (61)

Women reiterated the desire for perfection as an employee observed in a previous study, making wellbeing-oriented technologies part of the burden of unfinished tasks (Hyvönen and Karjalainen, 2020). The pursuit of perfection through self-care is always in proportion to the prevailing social and cultural reality, although the dynamics behind

the culture of the workplace and in working life remain easily invisible (Cederstöm and Spicer, 2015).

Maintaining Networks and Working Relationships During Telework

Based on emotional labour, a recent research concept in organisational research, social labour (Fleming, 2009; Anderson et al., 2016) can be used to look at networks and friendships in a work context. Telework is often exhausted by social interaction (Felstead and Henseke, 2017) and thus long-term full-time telecommuting radically changed the way work-related networks and friendships are maintained. Many respondents reported asking at the beginning of the telework period for news in remote meetings but soon became tired of the practice. Women talked a little more about their friendships, but the social relationships at work were talked about in much the same way regardless of gender.

Helping and cheering colleagues is part of my work identity. It seems to be more difficult to apply remotely. Among other things, my attitude, enthusiasm, and smile are heard well in customer calls, and that is why I pay attention to it, whether I work remotely or in the office. – Male, 30-39, small children (59)

The differences were reflected in the fact that several women said that they were introverted or withdrawn and that teleworking was therefore well suited to them:

I have found that I feel much better when I work remotely. I am an introvert in nature and tired of excessive noise in the office or constant human contact. – Female, 30-39, no care responsibilities (80)

On the other hand, it is a relief that there has been no need to practice small talk. In the past, I wanted to take myself to the so-called discomfort and make small talk. But this situation has allowed for social isolation where social skills have not had to be used. I wonder, of course, whether this will result in a complete decline in social skills and a move away from discomfort. – Female, 40-49, a child (54)

Women reported also a bad conscience regarding the maintenance of networks and friendships at work – more should have been done. The men did not indicate this bad conscience, although they did not report any further doing such work.

Discussion

Ongoing and accelerating work change processes will affect humanly, socially, and economically sustainable working life in many ways. The structures and contents of the work, the required knowledge base, and livelihoods are changing and the meanings of the work itself are expected to change. The acceleration of globalisation, demographic change, new technologies, and climate change is having a wide-ranging

impact on all societies and organisations in the world of work, with different capacities and opportunities to respond to new challenges and opportunities. Finland has many strengths, due to which the change of work can be controlled and it can produce positive results for many people and areas of work. In these processes of change, people and groups of people are in quite different positions. The opportunity to use one's abilities, advance one's career, and be treated fairly has a decisive effect on well-being at work.

The study found that the boundary between work and other life became gendered as care and housework were distributed unequally. In addition, emotional labour became gendered – women emphasised empathy, and men pep talks in the encounters of working life. Aesthetic labour had changed tremendously with both genders due to teleworking, but the ways of aesthetic labour had changed and became gendered. Spiritual labour or different mental techniques was practiced fairly evenly, but where men stated that they did not practice any technique, women answered 'I do not practice, but should.' The effects of the corona crisis on future expert work for women highlight self-management, loneliness, and growing responsibility. Research shows how blurring and drawing the boundaries of work in telework is not genderless, but gender is reflected in many ways in experts' perceptions of telework and the future of telework.

The workload becomes individualised in working life and placed on the employees' responsibility. However, organisations, and especially those in management positions, have also a legal responsibility to monitor the workload and working hours. Especially knowledge workers' overtime is often invisible and burdens them. In evermore fragmented knowledge work, it is common for experts to work invisibly over time. According to the Working Conditions Barometer (The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2020), 18 per cent of senior staff work overtime on a weekly or more frequent basis. It is important to prevent congestion through the division of labour and ethically sustainable management of organisations, not just by individualising problems from overload to individuals. Structural problems primarily require structural solutions.

The responsibility for organising telework cannot be left to an individual employee alone. If the employer requires the employee to work remotely, it should ensure sound working conditions. Leadership needs to be developed that supports the employee's ability to focus on their work and be able to do their job well. The employee must not be solely responsible for their performance and work process. Fairness and equal treatment are key in realising the full potential of the changing world of work. Gender-specific and equality measures, as well as action at the workplace level, are key to developing a stable and prosperous society and future working life.

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Gender Equality: Key Developments in Europe and India

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Abstract

The paper aims at providing an overview of the current developments in gender equality by comparing Europe with India, using the examples of Finland, Spain and Austria, based on the data collected in the Global Gender Gap (GGG) Report of the World Economic Forum (WEF). The aim is to compare the development of the major indicators in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, as well as political empowerment using data from the last 10 years (from 2012 to 2021). The findings of this statistical analysis are cross-referenced with qualitative data which was generated in the Rainbow project during the needs analysis phase in 2018 and 2019, concerning the major career inhibitors, which were reported by Indian women starting their careers. The results indicate a negative trend in India, with economic participation declining over the last decade, while in Europe a slow but steady positive development is taking place.

Introduction

Gender equality has still not been reached by any society. Women are still underrepresented in political and economic decision-making bodies. Their voice is not equally heard to those of men. Still, in many countries, their access to healthcare and education is not adequate and violence and discrimination against women are still high. Concerning economic participation and opportunities, women still experience a lack of decent work opportunities, face occupational segregation, and unequal payment (United Nations, n.d.).

The United Nations (UN) has addressed and acknowledged the vital role of women and has defined the sustainable development Goal No. 5 which reads: ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.’

The GGG Report was introduced by the WEF in 2006. It tries to measure progress towards gender equality in four key areas, namely, economic opportunity, education,

health, and political leadership. The Report presents country rankings and provides an extensive statistical overview of data collected from many countries (156 in the 2021 edition). This Year's report has been summarised as follows:

Another generation of women will have to wait for gender parity, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021. As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be felt, closing the global gender gap has increased by a generation from 99.5 years to 135.6 years. (World Economic Forum, 2021)

In the summary of the GGG Report 2021, the WEF points out that globally, the average distance completed to parity is currently at 68 per cent, which constitutes a step back compared to 2020 (-0.6 percentage points). This setback is 'mainly driven by a decline in the performance of large countries'. The WEF concludes, that at the current pace it will take 135,6 years to close the gender gap worldwide.

Looking at the datasheet of India and comparing the numbers to former years, India's performance seems to be even worse than the world average and declining.

The paper at hand looks into the trends and developments in gender equality as depicted by the GGG reports of 2012 to 2021, comparing the data of Austria, Finland and Spain on one hand, and India on the other. It will try to tackle the following questions:

1. What is the development of the GGGR indicators over the last 10 years of India as compared to Austria, Finland, and Spain?
2. How can these results be summarised and which conclusions can be drawn from them?

The GGGR

The GGG Report was introduced by the WEF in 2006. It tries to measure progress towards gender equality in four key areas, namely, economic opportunity, education, health, and political leadership. The Report presents country rankings and provides an extensive statistical overview of data collected from many countries (156 in the 2021 edition). To be included recent data must be available for at least 12 out of the 14 involved indicators.

The GGG score (based on the population-weighted average for each of the 156 countries included) in 2021 is 67.7 per cent. Interestingly, out of the 152 countries registered in 2020 and 2021, 98 have improved their score while 55 have regressed or stalled. The countries scoring best, are as in previous years dominated by European countries (7 out of the top 10) with New Zealand (scoring 4th), Namibia (6th), and Ruanda (7th) completing the entries.

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This points to a severe setback, most probably caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, while over the last years a small but steady improvement of the situation has been registered.

The GGGR measures the overall global gender gap scores across four main subindexes, namely, Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. The 2021 decline (as compared to 2020) is caused by a reversal in performance on the Political Empowerment gap, while progress on the Economic Participation and Opportunity, Health and Survival, as well as Educational Attainment subindexes, have been marginal or stalled. (World Economic Forum, 2021)

As Educational Attainment and Health and Survival sub-indexes have been mostly closed (registering a 95 per cent or 96 per cent level of attainment) most differences can be seen in the Economic Participation and Opportunity as well as Political Empowerment sub-indexes.

Short View on Gender Stereotypes and Gender Equality in India

Traditionally, India has followed the patriarchal social structure where fathers and/or grandfathers are the decision-makers as heads of their families (and other communities). (Budhwar et al., 2005), resulting in stereotypical role distribution. The rising middle class in India is on one hand allowing for more complex consumption patterns and job profiles (Saxena et al, 2010) but may as well contribute to the reduced economic participation rate of women, as there is less need to work out of necessity to earn an additional income. The current paper addresses the results reported by Lämsä et al. (2020), expert interviews in focus groups, with a total of 48 experts were conducted. According to the qualitative research results, India is a very patriarchal society. Women aiming to pursue a career in working life are the minority. There is no established gender mainstreaming culture, and a strong gender divide still exists. Opportunities for education and career are not the same for women as for men and attitudes towards women who do participate in working life are often skeptical. It is almost considered a shame if a woman who is already married is working and exercising a career instead of having children and caring for them and the family. Women participate increasingly in education, but education does not often lead to a career.

Upkeeping careers for women is still very difficult as woman's value in society is still strongly based on family life and (unpaid) care responsibilities. Gender role stereotyping forces working women to struggle between family and career often resulting in the choice of traditional role models instead of a career. Women lack female role models who have prominent positions in working life and a family. Many other aspects in relation to women's careers are biased negatively, such as chances for international mobility or the opportunity to invest in management and career training. Summarising, India is lagging in overcoming stereotypical gender roles and in establishing modern, more gender-equal values, explaining the seeming contradiction of a rising middle class and better living standard, and reduced labour force participation rate of Indian women.

Methodology

For the exploratory data analysis, the GGGR data for 2012-2021 have been collected. As of 2019, there was no report, this constitutes a total of nine data points per country. The countries participating in the Erasmus+ project Rainbow, Austria, Finland, India, and Spain have been selected for comparison. All four countries have participated in all nine of the mentioned reports.

Mastracci (2017) found that the five most influential indicators for explaining the variation in the GGG score are the proportion of women holding seats in the Parliament, the number of years out of the past 50 that a country has had a female head of state, purchasing power parity between women and men, the proportion of ministerial-level positions held by women, and the percentage of women in public sector management. All of these are part of the Economic Participation and Opportunity and Political Empowerment sub-indexes.

The following analysis will concentrate on the development of these two sub-indexes.

Economic Participation

The scores for Economic Participation and Opportunity start at values between 0,459 in India and 0,785 in Finland. While in the European countries the values are starting from high levels and mostly stagnating, with a small tendency to grow, the Indian values, starting at a comparably lower level decline steadily through the years and end with a level, which is clearly below the starting level, having lost 0,133 points, constituting a steady decline of Economic Participation and Opportunity rates in India (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Scores for Economic Participation and Opportunity

Years	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021
Austria	0,652	0,664	0,670	0,705	0,650	0,660	0,658	0,659	0,665
Finland	0,785	0,773	0,786	0,815	0,794	0,793	0,786	0,788	0,806
India	0,459	0,446	0,410	0,383	0,408	0,376	0,385	0,354	0,326
Spain	0,646	0,652	0,647	0,674	0,668	0,657	0,660	0,681	0,699

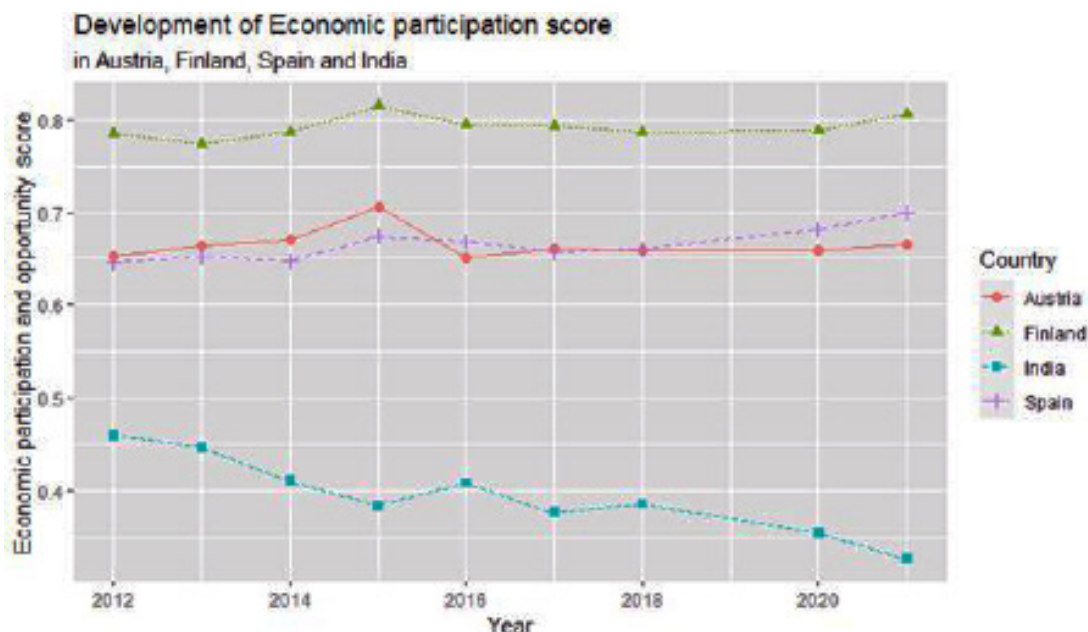


Figure 2.1: Economic Participation

Source: CGGRP 2012-202, World Economic Forum

Political Empowerment

The scores for political empowerment start at values between 0,284 in Spain and 0,616 in Finland. While in the European countries, there have been positive developments, especially through the last 5 years, the rating of India dropped from a maximum of 0,433 in 2015 and 2016 to a relatively low score of 0,276 in 2021 (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Scores for Political Empowerment

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021
Austria	0,332	0,332	0,257	0,246	0,246	0,216	0,242	0,344	0,473
Finland	0,616	0,616	0,616	0,607	0,607	0,519	0,519	0,563	0,669
India	0,334	0,385	0,385	0,433	0,433	0,407	0,382	0,411	0,276
Spain	0,284	0,284	0,314	0,326	0,316	0,354	0,354	0,527	0,491

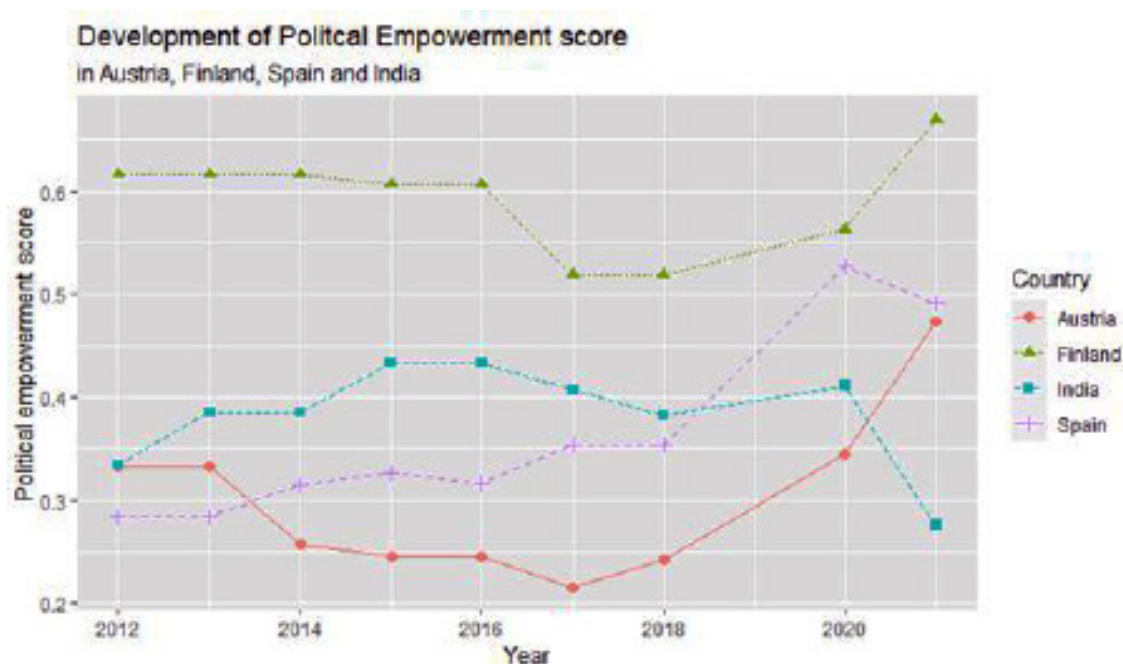


Figure 2.2: Political Empowerment

Source: CGGRP 2012-2021, World Economic Forum

India in 2021 According to the Global Gender Gap Report

Looking at the datasheet and the country analysis published by the WEF, India has lost another 28 places and now ranks 140th on the country ranking. In more detail, India has closed 62.5 per cent of its gender gap which is 4.2 percentage points larger than 2020 and 1.9 per cent below the first report analysed in this study (2012; 64.4 per cent).

On one hand, the current level of political empowerment dropped, with a severe change in the share of women among ministers, which halved (from 23.1 per cent to 9.1 per cent), also the rate of women in the Parliament, with 14.4 per cent stays low.

In the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex, India lost 3 per cent this year, placing India at position 151, with only five countries scoring lower. The labour force participation rate dropped from 24.8 per cent to 22.3 per cent, in India only 22.3 per cent of women participating in the labour market, translating to a massive gender gap of 72 per cent. Also, women again had a smaller share in professional and technical roles and senior and managerial positions. Only 14.6 per cent are held by women. Women's estimated earned income is only 21 per cent of men's. Discrimination against women is also reflected in Health and Survival subindex statistics, India ranks among the bottom five countries in this subindex. Sex ratio at birth gaps is still wide, placing India on the 152nd rank in this aspect. On the plus side, 96.2 per cent of the

Educational Attainment subindex gender gap has been closed, with parity achieved in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. But one-third of women are still illiterate (34.2 per cent) compared to 17.6 per cent of men. (World Economic Forum, 2021)

Glimpse at Austria, Finland, and Spain

In comparison, all three of the analysed European countries have closed more than 75 per cent of the gender gap (77 per cent Austria, 78 per cent Spain, and 86 per cent Finland), scoring between 21st (Austria) and 2nd (Finland). While the three countries are still far from having resolved all gender differences, there is slow but steady progress, mostly driven by political developments, with an increasingly high number of women in relevant political positions. While there is currently a definite movement in the political arena the level of Economic Participation still mostly stagnates at relatively high levels but with still a long way to go.

Discussion

In answer to the first research question: ‘What is the development of the GGGR indicators of the last 10 years of India as compared to Austria, Finland, and Spain?’ it can be concluded, that while in Western Europe, which is the currently best-developed region concerning gender equality there is still a slow positive development toward more gender equality, mostly concerning political empowerment but also in lesser extent in Economic Participation, that trend cannot be seen in India. In India, a steady decline in Economic Participation can be noticed. This negative trend has already led to India losing its position in the lower midfield, dropping to the lowest ranks in the GGGR. While the trend in Europe is strongly aiming at gender parity for political positions like parliamentarians and ministers, in India currently only 14,1 per cent of seats in the Parliament are claimed by women. Sadly the development points to a widening of the already big gap between the European countries and India in this aspect. Economically, the trend of a lower and lower participation rate of women in the labour force, with a current level of just 22.3 per cent and women on average only earning 21 per cent of men, is alarming with an enormous loss of value creation for the Indian state, essentially if 80 per cent of women are not working. India is losing about 40 per cent of its maximum value creation, which puts the country at a massive disadvantage towards competitors and the women involved in roles of enforced dependencies.

In answer to the second research question ‘How can these results be summarised, and which conclusions can be drawn from them?’ It should be clearly stated that the indicators of the GGGR are not faultless and can for sure not cover the full development of gender mainstreaming initiatives in India. The Indian state and many other Indian institutions have started numerous initiatives to tackle Sustainable Development Goal 5, with the clear aim to improve the situation. It remains to be seen how successful this

initiative will be. On the other hand, focus group results from Lämsä et al. (2020) have demonstrated that traditional gender stereotypes strongly persist. For the time being the only recommendation resulting from the numbers reviewed can be to double the efforts, especially concerning the empowerment of women as decision-makers and role models. The dangerous trend of declining participation rates of women in the labour force should be an issue of high concern and initiatives should be started at all levels of society. The rising middle class reduces the necessity of women working for survival but currently fails to increase the number of women successfully achieving leadership positions. Support systems for women, but also for businesses in India need to be created to fully tackle the potential of women in India. Projects and initiatives as the Erasmus+ project Rainbow can contribute to this development.

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Women Empowerment in India: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract

Even though the Constitution of India provides equal rights to men and women yet women are deprived of equal status in social, political, and professional arenas. Women in India continue to live under the stress and strain of male domination so the empowerment of women is crucial for the development of India. P. Das has rightly commented that empowerment includes several dimensions as self-strength, self-control, self-power, self-reliance, choice, dignity, independence, and so on. The process of women empowerment is a challenge to the ideology of the patriarchal system and the gender-based discrimination against women on the social, economic, and political front (Das, 2013). For global progress, women empowerment is an approach that is concerned with transforming power relations thus enabling the women to assert themselves and pave their way towards development and independence. The current article investigates the dimensions of women empowerment, that is, social, political, and economic. It shall focus on bringing out the challenges faced by the women of India in these areas and their prospective solutions. The transformation can be brought about only when society and women themselves change their mindset and become aware of their rights, capacities, and potential. The paper shall also look at the possibilities and the initiatives taken by the government, society, media, and voluntary organisations to mitigate the gap and create awareness about the opportunities for women empowerment.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Gender-Discrimination

Introduction

Whomever I want, I make him Rudra, Brahma, Rishis, and the Learned. This mantra of the Rigveda about the feminine power establishes women as a powerful entity (Upadhyay and Upadhyay, 2013). Almost half of mankind is really womankind. This half in every age and every land has coexisted with men in a relationship, which has varied between complete submission and complete equality. The status of women in India has undergone

various changes over various ages. In ancient India, women enjoyed equal status with men. They were educated and often enjoyed prominent roles in different fields. Not only women have a place of honour but were also entitled to participate freely in social activities. In the medieval period, India saw many foreign conquests, where foreign conquerors like the Mughals invaded India and imposed their culture which somehow adversely affected the condition of women. One of the immediate impacts of the coming of the Muslims was the introduction of the 'Parda' (veil) system. During the Mughal period, the position of women decayed day-by-day (Ashraf, 2000). In the modern period British rule in the eighteenth century brought in some degree of political orderliness but the social structure, customs, and practices remained unchanged. It was mainly during the nineteenth century that the reform movement undertaken by enlightened thinkers and readers of Indian society like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Eshwar Chandra Vidhyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati, etc., who understood the significance of women's participation in every field. Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, and many others led to a change for the betterment. Indian women played a very prominent role in the freedom struggle of the country. Women's participation in the freedom struggle began as early as 1817 when Bhima Bai Holkar fought and defeated British Colonel Malcolm. Rani Laxmibai fought very fiercely and fearlessly and set an example for the forthcoming generations. In the twentieth century Vijaylakshmi Pandit, Madam Cama, Aruna Asif Ali, and Kamala Nehru raised their voice for the upliftment of women. The Nationalist Movement of India brought a minor change in the mindset of the Indian people, particularly during the Gandhian phase when various Satyagrahs (holding firmly for the truth) was launched and a good number of urban and rural women came out of their houses and joined hands for the national cause. But it was also observed that only women from the well-to-do family stepped ahead. After a long struggle, India achieved independence in 1947. In 1949, the Constitution of India was drafted which gave equal rights to all Indian citizens. The Indian Constitution came into force in 1950 and Articles 14, 15, 16, 39, etc., were all concerned about the rights of women. Although the Constitution of India provides equal rights to men and women yet women in India are subjected to inequalities in the social, economic, political, and other fields. They still continue to live under the disparities and strain of male domination. Hence, the empowerment of women is essential for the holistic development of the country.

Women Empowerment: Conceptual Framework and Challenges

After a long time of Indian Independence, unfortunately, no major change is visible in the condition of women and the major challenge that is perceptible is to empower women not just socially but also economically and politically so that they can lead a better life. Women are not born passive, secondary, or non-essential but all the forces of the external world have conspired to make them so. Gender equality is a demand for simple

justice and dignity for women. Gender equality exists when both sexes are able to share the distribution of power and are financially independent, have excess to education, and can protect their rights. Men have to be taught to give the right to women to manage her life, have control over her mind and body, and take her decisions independently. 'One is not born a woman but rather becomes a woman.' (De Beauvoir, 1973). Beauvoir also states that femininity does not arise from differences in biology, psychology, or intellect. It is, in fact, construction of civilisation, a reflection not of 'essential' differences in men and women but differences in their situations.

The concept of empowerment has a long end, diverse history both in academic and policy circles from political theory to community development and from community organising to social inclusion. The origin of the concept in political theory can be linked to the American labour movements of the 1930s and the 1940s and the American civil rights movement of the 1960s and the 1970s. (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962) Empowerment refers to increasing the social, political, economical, and spiritual or gender strength of an individual or community. Empowerment has several dimensions like social empowerment, economic empowerment, political empowerment, legal empowerment, psychological empowerment, or empowerment of a particular caste, class or gender, etc. Every dimension has its significance. Empowerment is a process for marginalised people to obtain basic opportunities. It also includes encouraging and developing the skill for future needs.

The distribution of power in Indian society occurs from the ideology of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a social system in which the power of the family is in the hands of the senior male member and this gives rise to gender inequality. The patriarchal male-dominated Indian society changes the psychology of the girl as well as the male child. A girl is accustomed to feeling that she is inferior and boys are taught to consider themselves powerful and superior. The process of women empowerment is a challenge to the ideology of the patriarchal system and gender-based discrimination which is visible everywhere in the form of domestic violence, unequal wages, sexual harassment in the workplace, dowry, and other gender-based discriminations. The term empowerment gained popularity over the past few decades. It refers to a variety of activities ranging from individual, self-realisation, and self-assertion to participating in the process that influences decision-making. Broadly the process of empowerment of women may encompass political, social, economic, legal, and cultural activities that influence the capacity of women to take part in the decision-making process at various levels (Rao, 1996).

For the last few decades, the concept of empowerment of women has come to occupy a key place in almost all the countries both developed and developing. Several issues related to the concept of women empowerment have been engaging the serious attention of researchers and social sciences disciples. It is widely asserted in the discussions of academic discourse that empowerment occurs when someone who did not have power

earlier is given power and this power empowered a sense of ownership and control over resources. When the empowered feel responsible they take more initiative in their work and enjoy it. Empowerment is facilitated by a combination of factors including values, leadership actions, job structures, and reward systems (Bunch and Frost, 2000). In Indian society, the process of women empowerment is all the more a sensitive issue. Some fundamental changes are required to perceive the women's issues and problems as well as a scientific and rational understanding should be developed to solve the tribulations faced by women and fulfill their needs. Here we can discuss mainly three indicators that show the empowerment of women, namely, the status of women in the household, workplace, and community. In the household, the indicators are the degree of influence in decision-making exercised by women. In the workplace, the indicators are the positive and negative reactions to work and to what extent work has a positive impact on the lives of women. At the community level, the indicators are the involvement of women in politics and social activities. India being a patriarchal society, there is a prevalent patriarchal mindset that restricts the free movement of women which, in turn, leads to their disempowerment. There are many hurdles in the path of women's empowerment as gender discrimination, social and cultural barriers, lack of awareness among women due to lack of education and health issues, sex stereotyping, and economic dependence on men.

Suggestions

Gender equality is the core of human rights and bedrock for achieving sustainable development. Increasing women's participation in political leadership and decision-making is essential for the economic and social development of the economy (United Nations, 2018). Therefore women need to be empowered socially, economically, and politically so that they may live their lives with complete dignity. Women need to be empowered and men need to be oriented about their obligations towards women (Sayon, 2013). Although due efforts have been made by the government, women organisations, and non-government organisations but still there is a huge gap and a lot needs to be done for protecting and empowering women. As has been rightly said by Kle Blanchard et al. that 'Empowerment is not giving people power, people already have plenty of power in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation to their jobs magnificently. We define empowerment as letting this power out' (Blanchard et al., 1996). Hence, it is observed that women have a lot of potential within themselves and the need of the hour is to bring it out. A few suggestions for the same are mentioned as under:

- The monitoring of the implementation of the laws and acts meant for the empowerment and protection of women should be stringently paid attention to by the governing bodies.
- Women's education should be encouraged as education and awareness are interlinked.

- Various measures should be taken to eliminate the stereotyped attitudes of male members. Awareness-raising campaigns, local administration, and society as a whole could play a major role.
- The provisions of reservation of seats for women in the political offices at different levels should be supported and a positive environment should be created so that women may utilise the provided opportunities.
- More and more participation in the voluntary sectors should be encouraged to create awareness among women regarding laws and schemes meant for women's development.
- The implementation of government plans and welfare schemes for the empowerment of women should be strengthened. The government should also take necessary steps to prevent any kind of discriminatory practices.
- Media can play a significant role in empowering women by raising their voices and concern.
- More emphasis should be paid to the basic healthcare facilities for women. Around 70 per cent population in India resides in rural areas and hence, it is necessary to strengthen the health structure in these areas by providing more trained doctors and nursing staff to enable women to perform efficiently.
- The empowerment of women in India can be best achieved by women-to-women contact. Public interactions, meeting with various groups, women's study centre, and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) can play a very important role in the capacity building of women.

Sustainable and long-term development is not possible without the participation and empowerment of women hence ensuring the social, economic, and political empowerment of women and her welfare is of prime importance and concern for the development of the country. Kabeer (1999) has defined women's empowerment as 'the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them'. Women empowerment has received increased scholarly attention in the last several decades as an avenue of enhancing mobility, health, economic condition, and participation in decision-making by women (Afrin, 2008).

In short, a refurbishment in the all-around concern with respect to women's lives is required to strengthen the socio-economic conditions of women and ensure their well-being which is not only essential for women but the nation, as well as the worth of a civilisation, can be judged by the place of women in the society.

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Do Women have Potential as Entrepreneurs? Entrepreneurial Competencies of Female Business Students

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Abstract

Research on the difference between male and female approaches and behaviours in the entrepreneurship context has been part of research for a while. Statistical data still claims that only every fifth startup has at least one woman among the founders. By a GEM study they also tend to have lower confidence in their abilities.

This empirical research paper is grounded in the established concept of fourteen entrepreneurial competencies with piloted assessment instruments. These competencies are proven to be enhanced through entrepreneurship education.

With a sample of 522 female and 564 male students, statistical analysis establishes entrepreneurial competencies where female students are stronger or potentially weaker. This paper represents inclinations of international, but mainly euro area students, studying at the University of TalTech, Tallinn, Estonia.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Startups, Entrepreneurial Competencies*

Introduction

The research, conducted by Pierre-Nicolas Schwab on 19 July 2021 with 840 European entrepreneurs has shown that there are fundamental differences related to gender. This affects the dynamics of female entrepreneurship. Women and men don't do business in the same way, which has practical consequences on their chances of success. (Schwab, 2021)

The discussion on the difference between male and female approaches to starting and running a business had been a hot topic in business research for a while.

Regarding statistical data, even though the share of global startups with at least one female founder doubled between 2009 and 2019, it is still about 20 per cent of all startups, meaning that every fifth startup has at least one woman among the founders

(Rudden, 2021). In addition, the 2016 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) has revealed that Europe has the lowest number of women in early-stage entrepreneurship in the world (about 6 per cent). In 2021, highlighting the problem, despite the last few years' positive trends for women, GEM analysis shows that most new businesses are still more likely to be started by men rather than women.

That drastic difference has raised a logical question as to why there is such a difference and there were many researches and reports made trying to come up with insight into this issue. For example, Sahil Raina (2016) finds the connection between the lack of Venture Capital Funds with a female general partner and female-founded startups which she proves to be linked. Johanna Braun, member of the EIT Urban Mobility Investment Committee, states 'Women are expected to be both aggressive and reflective, an impossible combination of skills which is one of the hurdles in reaching senior positions in organisations. The same bias negatively influences how female founders are treated while fundraising.'

On the other hand, the 2016 GEM report makes a disappointing conclusion, that women are disadvantaged from the start, having fewer role models (which could affect their willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activity) as well as mentorship opportunities and professional connections, which could affect the sustainability of their businesses in the long run. They tend to have lower confidence in their abilities, coupled with higher fear of failure rates, which may well contribute to the problem'.

According to Petridou, et al. (2009), who examined entrepreneurial programmes offered by Greek Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to 1,639 students in different scientific disciplines at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, there were higher enrollment rates of males than females for those courses.

Moreover, Catic-Kajtzovic and Nuhanovic (2016) claim, that 'as expected according to the stereotype and characteristics of a patriarchal environment in which they grew up, male students show significantly higher values of entrepreneurial competencies that are needed to start a businesses'.

It can be concluded from the earlier-mentioned arguments that women have less contribution to startup creation and leading (and participating in entrepreneurial education in some areas) than men, for a variety of reasons, one and significant of those is lack of confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities and competencies. Schwab (2021) looks deeper into the problem and it becomes obvious that women in many cases do not start their business because they do not feel confident about the outcome and success of the business (64.7 per cent of men are very confident or confident in the future, compared to 48.2 per cent of women). Women also feel generally less entrepreneurial than men (34,05 per cent of women consider themselves as someone with an 'entrepreneurial spirit' compared to 48,83 per cent of men (Schwab, 2021). This data leads to deeper thinking: starting a business requires having special entrepreneurial competencies (for

example, creativity and cooperation), but, more importantly, the confidence that they already possess or might improve these competencies.

Research Goal

The goal of this research is to identify in which exact entrepreneurial competencies female respondents feel less confident and less secure than their male counterparts. The next step would be to prepare special female-oriented workshops, that could be easily included in the entrepreneurial educational system and piloted at Tallinn University of Technology, focusing on the previously identified ‘weak’ competencies.

Research Support and Environment

The authors of this research are a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer of Entrepreneurship and Business Planning at Tallinn University of Technology with a strong interest in providing equal opportunities to students with different backgrounds, genders, sexual orientation, etc. The eventual goal of the provided courses is to increase the outcome of startups in Estonia, giving students the required knowledge and courage to launch their projects. Regarding the data of Startup Estonia, only 15-20 per cent of all startups are founded by female entrepreneurs, and ‘the potential of women is still underused in the startup sector and the venture capital world’.

Theoretical Background

Entrepreneurial Competencies

The concept of entrepreneurship competence is based on the definition of entrepreneurship means a process where the opportunities of the entrepreneurial environment are used to implement ideas creating value for others. Based on this understanding of the entrepreneurship, the concept of entrepreneurship competence can be conceived as a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are essential for value creation during the implementation of ideas, for the development of the entrepreneurial mindset of learners, and sustainable coping with work and everyday life (Venesaar et al., 2018).

The concept of entrepreneurial competencies models had been widely discussed in scientific research before with different approaches to allocation of different competencies. For example, Zhi-qiang et al. (2010) developed the idea of the model based on the triangle of ‘belief-desire-intention’ (so-called BDI Model). Some other authors, for example, Punchy and Salopaju, develop a two-sided model where researchers divide entrepreneurial competencies into two groups, namely, those required at the time of starting a business and through (proactiveness, change, risk-taking, seeing opportunities, soft, networking, decision-making, creativity, innovativeness) and

those, becoming more required and crucial later, when business is already established (leadership, communication, specialist, problem-solving).

Estonian Entrepreneurship Competence Model, used as a core theoretical concept for the current paper, groups 14 entrepreneurial competencies into 4 wider entrepreneurial competence areas by finding close correlations and interdependencies between them. The following competencies are considered to be entrepreneurial and grouped respectively according to the Estonian Entrepreneurship Competence Model (Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1: Estonian Entrepreneurial Competence Model

Group 1: Creative Thinking and Finding Solutions

Creativity

Creativity is a process that results in the novel (and useful) connections and solutions. In entrepreneurship, creativity is a key prerequisite for success which helps to solve complex problems (Karimi et al., 2014).

Problem Solving

Problem-solving skills are included in creativity and expressed in seeing problems, analysing, and proposing innovative solutions (Kelley and Littman, 2001). Problem-solving has been described as the skill to notice, define and present a problem, providing solutions, and choosing from among them, plan action, implement a solution, assess whether the achieved results meet the set goal and how successful one was in solving the problem (Kapur, 2015; Kikas, 2015).

Planning

Planning is the ability to make goal-oriented choices and decide how to move forward to achieve results. Planning involves reflection and organisation of activities to achieve the desired goal (Collins and Koechlin, 2012).

Ethics and Sustainability

This provides the foundation for such actions that also take into consideration the impact of entrepreneurial activity on the preservation of the natural environment, on the well-being of the local and global community, and strives to improve rather than worsen them as much as possible (Venesaar et al., 2018).

Group 2: Acting Upon Opportunities and Ideas

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is the knowledge and understanding of financial affairs and related risks, the motivation and the confidence to make good use of this knowledge in all situations, improving personal and social financial well-being, and enabling economic participation (OECD, 2016).

Understanding Environment

Understanding the environment means being able to orientate in an entrepreneurial environment (e.g. monitor political, economic, social, technological, and ecological environment) and at different levels (e.g. local, national, and global level) and analyse the impact of the environment on value creation, including entrepreneurial activities (Rasmussen and Nybye, 2013).

Opportunity Discovery and Exploitation

Opportunity discovery and exploitation include searching for information and market awareness which enables one to notice, evaluate, and exploit the opportunities. The ability to find and connect information and alertness to what is happening in the field is necessary both in entrepreneurship and in entrepreneurial activities in the wider sense (e.g. being an employee in a company or everyday life situations). (Venesaar et al., 2018).

Group 3: Self-Management

Metacognition

Metacognition is the ability to think about one's cognitive processes (emotions, thinking, attention, strategies, etc.) and behaviour and regulate them (Flavell, 1979).

Growth Mindset

A growth mindset represents a particular trait of character, more grounded in beliefs and attitudes, but influencing other competencies.

Autonomous Motivation

In the case of autonomous motivation, the action is meaningful and valued by the actor and corresponds to what the person considers important and/or interesting to him (Deci and Moller, 2003). People who obtain autonomous motivation competence are more determined in reaching their objectives and more seldom require external motivation to act.

Coping With Emotions

Coping with emotion is the ability to notice, recognise, and name one's emotions, to be aware of the different ways of managing emotions, and to use these ways according to the situation (Garnefski and Kraaij, 2006).

Group 4: Managing Social Situations

Personal Initiative

Personal initiative is a combination of self-management, planning and field knowledge, and proactive work behaviour focussing on the long-term perspective and persistence (Frese and Fay, 2001).

Communication

Communication requires self-expression and understanding interaction partners (Dube and Marnewick, 2015) and manifests itself in the ability to regulate emotions and get along with others. It combines communication skills with self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision making, including ethical issues (Zhou and Ee, 2012).

Cooperation

Cooperation is a successful collaboration that requires a joint effort to achieve team goals, provided that team members have the necessary competencies and the desire to work as a team (Baker, et. al., 2006). Effective teamwork requires harmonious relationships, shared responsibility, the joy of work, and dedication, only then can outstanding results develop in synergy (Baker et al., 2006; Salas et al., 2008).

Regarding the researchers, these competencies:

... can be developed, are intertwined, and form an integrated whole entrepreneurship competence. This means that each learner can develop some competence in each area, but at a different level and in a way that depends on his/her age, educational background, and/or previous experience. (Venesaar et al., 2018)

Research Methodology

Research Design

This paper is focused on empirical evidence to propose results for generalisation the researchers care about solid data starting with the sample, in size, and representing the cohort of students' gender- and nationality-wise. The quantitative statistical analysis is appropriate to make distinctions between two main variables of interest, namely, entrepreneurial competencies of male and female students. Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, and clustering are used. The validation and reliability measures give ground to results.

The Sample

Out of the students who take part in the courses Basics of Entrepreneurship, Introduction to Entrepreneurship, and Business Planning at Tallinn University of Technology 1,087 respondents took part in the survey (564 females, 522 males, 1 marked themselves as 'other' gender).

Table 4.1: Mean Scores for a Sample of 522 Female and 564 Male Students

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This study will make a comparison for female (N = 522) and male (N = 564) student groups, as only one student marked as 'other' and therefore has no effect in analysis, not also mentioned when presenting results.

Surveys were conducted by the team consisting of the Department of Business and Administration lecturers and researches, ensuring that participants of entrepreneurship courses take the survey. This eliminates the problem of biased results for more entrepreneurial or active students.

The Survey

The Survey was conducted twice for each student at the beginning and in the end of the course to track the dynamics and improvement of one's entrepreneurial competencies after completing the course.

The survey instrument has been developed under the programme of Edy & Tegu initiated by the Estonian Ministry of Education to develop evidence-based and future competence-oriented entrepreneurship education at all educational levels.

Research Results

This study starts with survey instrument validation. Before any further statistical analysis, there is a need to establish that data used is reliable. For a questionnaire consisting of 14 research constructs with repeated testing, a strong validity is achieved. Alpha shows that results for both attempts, before and after, are consistent and reliable (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Cronbach Alpha for Two Attempts

<i>Reliability Statistics</i>			
<i>Before</i>		<i>After</i>	
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N of Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
0,842	14	0,865	14

For the second step, the comparison of mean scores competency-wise and assessed both before and after the study semester, is presented. The clear and visually observable trend points to the more developed competencies as well as lower-scored items (Figure 4.2).

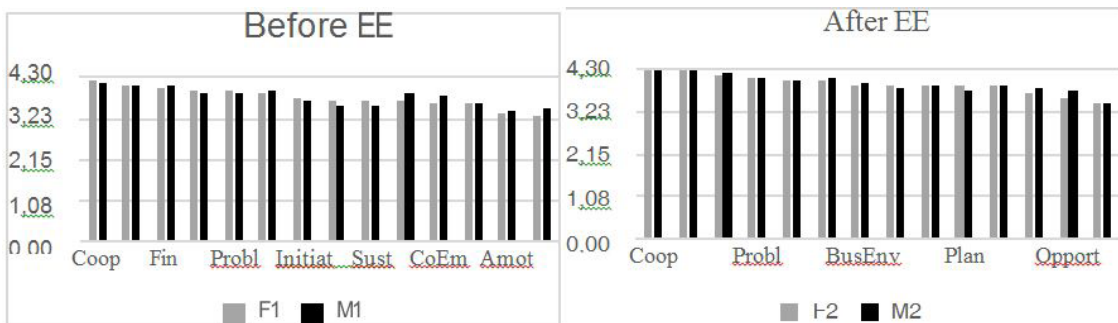


Figure 4.2: Mean Scores According to Competencies

Source: Compiled by authors

Cooperation is scored equally highest by both, male and female students similarly before and after the semester of entrepreneurship studies. On the other hand, when before the entrepreneurship courses understanding of the business environment, autonomous motivation, and opportunity recognition come and the weakest of entrepreneurial competencies, after the studies understanding of the business environment has a good increase, but has no or little effect on opportunity recognition, autonomous motivation and ability to cope with emotions.

These are, however, results based on mean scores and to make valid conclusions, there is a need to understand the distributions of students' behind those mean values.

Hence, the next step of the study investigates if the sample so-called 'low and high achievers' can be separated. Clustering analysis shows that indeed, the two major groups differ (Table 4.3). It can also be inferred from means that those differences are not radical. Moreover, the largest group of students place into the cluster of students generally scored higher in all competencies.

Table 4.3: Cluster Analysis

	<i>Final Cluster Centres</i>	
	<i>1 N = 468</i>	<i>2 N = 619</i>
Meta1	3,81	4,31
GrowthMinds1	3,83	4,04
Creativ1	3,27	4,18
AutonMotiv1	3,33	3,45
ProblemSol1	3,52	4,23
Planning1	3,28	3,95
Sustainab1	3,31	3,91
Commun1	3,54	4,25
Initiative1	3,28	4,07
Cooperation1	3,89	4,42
BusOpport1	2,97	3,74
BusEnviron1	3,22	3,91
FinancialLit1	3,68	4,36
CopingEmotions1	3,37	3,98

Cluster analysis reveals some interesting results to be discussed. Earlier we stated that cooperation is the construct with the highest scores in this study. There are a visible difference between the two groups, lower and higher scoring students. The same pattern is in financial literacy and creativity where difference is statistically relevant.

Continuing with deeper analysis, the main interest of this paper, is the division of the scores between male and female students, and whether relevant changes can be observed (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Summary of Cross Tabulations (Female and Male Students' Score Choices)

	<i>Before</i>						<i>After</i>					
	1 - 2, 9		3 - 3, 9		4 - 5		1 - 2, 9		3 - 3, 9		4 - 5	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Meta1	23	11	155	138	386	373	10	11	97	93	457	418
GRMind	46	50	189	152	329	320	75	68	169	160	320	294
Creativ	79	46	232	167	253	309	42	25	168	147	354	350
Aut. Mot	65	68	418	373	81	81	45	53	419	359	100	110
Problem solv	19	34	219	205	326	283	18	21	180	152	366	349
Planning	8	14	307	313	249	195	4	12	279	270	281	240
Communication	10	10	208	198	346	314	4	5	182	171	378	346
Sustainability	11	17	303	311	250	194	7	7	240	243	317	272
Initiative	11	14	301	264	252	244	7	7	95	70	367	365
Cooperation	4	5	132	143	428	374	4	2	109	116	451	404
Bus. opportunity	28	21	419	343	117	158	21	8	342	291	201	223
Bus. environment	19	16	313	300	232	206	8	2	214	201	328	292
Fin. literacy	6	5	174	140	352	350	20	22	158	114	386	386
CopeEmotions	22	10	309	253	233	259	16	5	291	235	257	282

Since only single (0-2) students chose occasionally '1', this choice is added to intervals 2-2, 9. When based on the analysis of general mean scores, it can be argued that there are no differences between male and female students in entrepreneurial competencies, this analysis looks at a number of choices both groups (F, M) have made, and the important discrepancies come out. For metacognition, interestingly, more than half (57 per cent) of the lowest scored female students reconsidered their ability after the semester higher while male students' lowest score group remained the same. Even with the highest scores chosen, the female group is leading both in pre- and after-tests. For metacognitive abilities in general, there is a large number of students from both genders moving from average scores to the highest.

As already indicated earlier, based on mean score values, autonomous motivation, creativity, and here also the growth mindset, have the most of lowest scoring. The latter, growth mindset, is the only construct of this study, in which scores are lower in the after-test compared to the pre-semester test. All other 13 competencies demonstrate an increase. Lowest score-range increases by 39 per cent for female and 26 per cent of male students.

Creativity is the area, where female students have significantly (42 per cent) lower evaluation than male co-students and biggest group in the lowest score-group of all competencies. On the other hand, also here we see the biggest impact of learning through one semester with 101 female students more, compared to 45 male students added, found the creative abilities to be in the highest score range after the semester.

Autonomous motivation has the second-largest group of students with the lowest score interval, equally male and female. This is also an ability where only 14 per cent of male and 16 per cent of female students position in the highest score range (4-5). It follows that all students struggle with motivating themselves. This is an important aspect of everyday life and needs certainly further special attention. On the positive side, the after-test shows that 25 per cent of students of both genders (Female, Male) additionally have chosen the highest score (5). Which is a good indication that even that challenging aspect can be trained during studies.

Problem-solving comes slightly better for female students, more in the pre-test, but also after. There are 45 per cent more male students having weakest scores in the pre-test, while 14 per cent more remains for after-test. Planning has the same pattern, 22 per cent of female students appear to be very good at planning, and a third of male students admit their poor planning ability in the pre-test. Both competencies can be advanced through entrepreneurship education, so about 20 per cent of male students add on and a little less of female, to the highest ratings.

Two more competencies where female students can take a lead, communication, sustainable thinking and taking initiative, in the pre-test. Although in the after-test in the lowest score interval the difference disappears to an equal number for all three competencies. As per after-test results, slight advantage remains for female students in communication, becomes not relevant for taking initiative, but remains 15 per cent higher in sustainable thinking. Said that, however, sustainable thinking and taking initiative have big improvement between two surveys—for sustainability high scores improve by F-21 per cent, M-29 per cent, for initiative F-31 per cent, M-33 per cent.

Cooperation is the only ability with little, but not a relevant improvement, with similar distribution in pre- and after-tests. This is a construct where students have evaluated themselves to be most competent, with female students 13 per cent more in the pre-test and 10 per cent more in after-test.

Business opportunity recognition is rated very poorly by 49 students in the pre-test and 29 after. Most students (70 per cent) have moderate ability reflected in pre-test. Relatively more (18 per cent) are females. The situation improves during the semester but is still scored higher in after-test by male students, in the middle score range of 15 per cent and the highest score range of 10 per cent. So, it can be concluded that business opportunity recognition is more inclined towards male students.

The business environment is well-improved during the semester—30 per cent students, both male and female sample make a good shift into the highest scoring group, However, this group still consists of 10 per cent more of female students.

A very interesting change occurs in the aspect of financial literacy, where students of both genders assess their awareness better before the semester. 31 students become more realistic about their competence and fall into the lowest scoring group while 72 improve

their competence and add themselves to the highest scoring group in the after-test. These changes are equally common to both genders, as the level of scores.

Coping with emotions is among the lowest scores competencies for both genders. In both pre- and after-test half (52 per cent; 48 per cent) of students fall into the satisfactory (3-3, 9) area. But, in the lowest-scoring range we see twice more and in the after-test a third more female students. There is no significant improvement during the semester and we find 9 per cent more male students in a highest scoring group in both surveys.

To conclude, the large sample enables us to make generalisations and argue for some inclinations of competencies gender-wise. Surprisingly, out of 14 entrepreneurial competencies in this research model, only in three we found male students to perform stronger. These are Creativity, Business Opportunity, and Coping with Emotions (Table 4.5). Six competency areas are more favouring female students—metacognition, problem-solving, planning, communication, sustainable thinking, and awareness of the business environment.

Table 4.5: Competency Gender-wise Inclinations

<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>0</i>
Metacognition	Creativity	Growth Mindset
Problem-solving	Business opportunity	Autonomous Motivation
Planning	Coping with emotions	Cooperation
Communication		Financial Literacy
Sustainable Thinking		
Business Environment		

There are also four competencies where gender was not relevant, and the patterns of change between the two surveys are distributed equally. These are a growth mindset, autonomous motivation, cooperation, and financial literacy. Interestingly in the 0 gender-effect competency list, we found both the highest scored construct of cooperation and the lowest assessed autonomous motivation.

For further discussion, the correlation between analysed variables is also studied (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Correlations Between Variables in Survey 2, Pre-test of the Study-semester

	<i>Meta2</i>	<i>ProblemSol2</i>	<i>Planning 2</i>	<i>Sustainab 2</i>	<i>Commun 2</i>
ProblemSol 2	,54**				
Planning2	,35**	,56**			
Sustainab2	,31**	,41**	,41**		
Commun2	,33**	,36**	,34**	,34**	
BusEnviron2	,36**	,44**	,42**	,50**	,34**

Notes: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.7: Correlations Between Variables in Survey 2, Pre-test of the Study-semester

	<i>Meta2</i>	<i>Creativ2</i>	<i>BusOpport2</i>
Creativ2	,36**		
BusOpport2	,38**	,52**	
CopingEmotions 2	,35**	,38**	,40**

Source: Compiled by authors.

Notes: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.8: Correlations Between Variables in Survey 1, Pre-test of the Study-semester

[Please provide readable / editable]

Source: Compiled by authors.

Discussion and Conclusion

In 3 out of 14 competencies female students show the pattern of estimating themselves lower compared with male ones (Creativity, Business Opportunity, and Coping with Emotions).

In 4 competencies self-assessment is equal or almost equal for males and females (Cooperation, Growth Mindset, Autonomous Motivation, and Financial Literacy).

In 6 competencies female students assess themselves higher on average than males (Metacognition, Problem Solving, Planning, Communication, Sustainable Thinking, and Awareness of Business Environment).

Regarding the provided analysis of the data, it has been empirically and statistically proven that the competencies can be improved within the learning process, which is a positive sign for further researches and practical implementations.

The difference in the self-evaluation of male and female students is especially crucial in Creativity, Coping with Emotions and Business Opportunity Competencies, where female students assess themselves significantly lower than male ones. The authors believe that conclusion reflects the patriarchal stereotypes of the society, where women are expected to be more practical in the everyday life, but also considered not to be able

to cope with their emotions very well. Being, as was mentioned earlier, a key prerequisite for success, Creativity is especially important for such activities as Business Creation. Startups commonly require a creative approach to almost every step of the entrepreneurial process—from coming up with a decent business idea to launching promotion activities in the situation of limited resources. Therefore, that could partially explain the lack of female-founded startups—lacking confidence in one’s creativity, females experience stronger ‘fear of failure’ and prefer other career paths to entrepreneurship (CEM, 2016). Moreover, as can be seen, Creativity and Business Opportunity identifying competencies belong to different sections of the entrepreneurial model (Figure 4.1), nevertheless, the connection between them is obvious. The ability to notice business opportunities requires a significant level of creativity, because it demands finding connections between customers’ needs and business activities, and, as was mentioned earlier, ‘creativity.... results in novel (and useful) connections’ (Karimi et al., 2014). That highlights the importance of focusing extra forces on the improvement of earlier mentioned competencies, namely, Creativity and Business Opportunity identification. Regarding the Coping with emotions competence, we can presume that one of the reasons why women evaluated themselves lower is the patriarchal stereotypes about women as being ‘more emotional’, crying more often, being influenced by hormones, etc. This hypothesis is being supported by Barrett et al. (1998), claiming that:

...much of this research linking women with intimacy and affiliation motives is based on global, retrospective self-report, and thus may suffer from the same weakness as self-descriptions of emotion characteristics; that is, these self-report ratings might be influenced by culturally held, gendered beliefs about relationships’ (Barrett et. al., 1998).

Therefore, the authors consider that three competencies in which female respondents evaluated themselves lower than male ones—Creativity, Business Opportunity Identifying, and Coping with Emotions—can at least partially derive from social stereotypes influencing young women’s self-reflection. Taking into account that Creativity and Business Opportunity Identifying are very closely related competencies and that Creativity competence was marked as the most disturbing one results-wise (with the most significant difference in results and is a key element for entrepreneurial activities), the authors consider that *improving female results in Creativity competence should be the focus of any institutions of the Estonian startup ecosystem, including universities.*

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Blended Traditional and Digital Marketing for Empowering Women Artisans: An Empirical Approach

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Abstract

The Indian handicraft industry is one of the oldest and most prominent industries. Many artisans are engaged in the handicraft sector, which provides primary and subsidiary employment, especially to women. The data published by various ministries on women's engagement (56.13 per cent in handicrafts) proves the importance of this sector in empowering women in India. Digital Marketing has emerged in the 1990s and 2000s. It is an approach of electronic communication that marketers use to endorse goods and services in the marketplace. In the recent past, many e-commerce portals and digital marketing channels have been introduced by private and government initiatives to enhance the market outreach and livelihood of artisans engaged in selling handicraft products. The major problem still faced by artisans is their dependency on middlemen for raw materials, finance, and the market for the finished products because of their illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty. The paper attempts to present an overview of the perception of women artisans on the existing marketing strategies, keeping in view the importance and potential of traditional and digital marketing platforms in empowering women artisans and their readiness and challenges being faced in adopting digital marketing platforms for selling handicraft products. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The collected data has been further analyzed with the help of visual and tabulated data descriptive statistics analyses using the Sankey Chart. Even though the new era of the digital age is here, the finding suggests that women artisans should not ignore traditional methods and try to blend digital marketing with traditional campaigns to achieve their goals.

Keywords: Traditional Marketing, Digital Marketing, Women Artisans, Empowerment, Handicrafts

Introduction

The Indian handicraft industry is one of the biggest cottage-based industries spread across rural and urban India. It provides direct and indirect employment to over 7 million people. A significant number of artisans are engaged in the handicraft sector, which provides primary and subsidiary employment, especially to women. The data published by various ministries on women's engagement (56.13 per cent in handicraft) proves the importance of this sector in empowering women in India. The Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) defines the term 'handicraft' as 'Items made by hand, often with the use of simple tools, and general artistic and traditional in nature, that includes objects of utility and decoration.' The handicraft industry plays a vital role as not only does it generate employment for the reasonable population of India as after the agriculture sector, but also is the second largest industry in India. India is one of the critical suppliers of handicraft products among many other nations in the world market.

Handicraft is a wide home accessory market that comprises handcrafted, semi-handcrafted, and partial machine or tool-made products. Handicraft products can be classified into various categories, e.g. decorative items: which are produced for commercial purpose and mainly used for decoration; consumer goods: which is generally produced for self-consumption or exchange purpose, and processing industry: which includes self-consumption entities and are also sold for exchange at markets.

Marketing plays a significant role in strengthening the handicraft sector and empowering women's artisans. In traditional handicraft marketing mechanisms, the artisans mainly depend on the middleman, government exhibitions/support, etc. The marketing of handicrafts also depends on how well the artisans meet the customers' demand with respect to the latest trends, quality, pricing, and other correlated issues. In many of the studies, it is found that the artisans, especially women, faced various problems/challenges in making a product for marketing because of their dependencies on raw materials, finance, and transportation of final products to market to others. Apart from this, the digital illiteracy, lack of awareness, lack of confidence in making independent decisions, and financial in-dependencies play an important role in marketing the handicraft products by the women artisans.

Review of Literature

The handicraft industry has its essence and characteristics, and it must preserve originality and local skills by using local resources in its products (Gough and Rigg, 2012). Traditional marketing strategies such as the SARAS mela have proven to be quite effective in establishing a brand image for Indian rural products made by craftsmen. This exhibition-sale expo not only provided a unique venue for direct interaction between rural artisans and consumers of craft goods from urban, metropolitan, and international markets, but it also boosted the confidence and enthusiasm of rural craftspeople and the

self-employment programme authorities. Rural product marketing through SARAS mela also provides chances for steady employment, income generation, and the possibility to capture a larger share of a considerable worldwide artisan market, as well as the preservation of Indian cultural heritage (Sarkar and Ganguly, 2015). Furthermore, due to 'rapid changes in consumer preferences and tastes, limited advertising and exposure, unremunerative pricing, and exploitation by middlemen', handcraft enterprises confront additional marketing challenges (Mohapatra, 2011). Nagori and Saxena (2012) proposed three key rules for improving handicraft product marketing: (1) favouring rural artisans' activities to reach desirable markets, (2) supporting handicraft artisans to meet market needs, and (3) improving market access, including the relationship with effective promotion.

Handicraft production is not unionised, necessitates a low initial capital investment (Ghouse, 2012), involves many women and persons from lower socio-economic groups, and generates eco-friendly items (Kumar and Rajeev, 2014). Rajasthan's THAR women add value to this study by emphasizing the empowerment and successful capacity building in the embroidery sector. Despite their difficult lifestyles, THAR women have increased their engagement in the artisan business. Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), namely, URMUL Seemant provides training and work on quality improvement in terms of design, colours, and new trends to create a platform for rural THAR women's socio-economic development, particularly those involved in handicrafts (Ojha and Mishra, 2013). When it comes to the working conditions of women artisans in India, they mostly work in the traditional and unorganised sectors, and according to the study, the handicraft and artisans industry has made a significant difference in their lives. They receive full support and timely payment, they are the breadwinners of their families, and they have established themselves as change agents and are leading successful life. Poor women have recognised their potential and learned to rely on themselves. They can balance career and family life with ease (Mittal and Sharan, 2021).

As a result, digital marketing may be one of the less-explored choices in this field. Dilip and Rajeev (2019) highlight the benefits of digital marketing in the handicraft industry, including: (1) e-commerce as a simple way to communicate with customers, (2) cost savings and time savings, (3) globalisation of organisation without explicit barriers through the internet, (4) increased sales opportunities, (5) more precise target markets, (6) improved marketing research, (7) no entry barrier, and (8) building customer loyalty. Agrawal and Agrawal, (2019) focused on the importance of two key digital marketing tools, namely, social media and Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and how proper implementation of this strategy can lead artisans to successful product awareness among buyers and end-users without wasting money in the process. The products cannot reach their target audience due to artisans' lack of awareness of current marketing technologies and traditional marketing tactics. Many artisans are unaware of digital marketing, and even fewer are limited to only two or three organic social media networks. It's past time

for artisans to begin utilising various digital marketing methods, mostly SEO and social media platforms, to promote their product line and engage with potential buyers for feedback and ongoing discourse. This would allow handicraft manufacturers to connect with clients, sell and market their products, and survive and thrive in the face of strong global competition and technological advancements.

Several factors influence the gaps in digital marketing. To begin with, local handicraft businesses believe they are lacking in market and marketing intelligence ‘due to a dearth of market research that includes variables such as buyer patterns in each region’ (Vaculčíková et al., 2020). Second, problems with digital marketing, such as web marketing, manifest a lack of collaboration between marketing managers and craftsmen (Blerim, 2012). Even though many people use internet platforms to promote and sell their items, many respondents were unaware. The study also proposes an E-Marketing Strategy, which would raise awareness among weavers and artisans about the use and practicality of online mediums through a series of workshops and training sessions. It also suggests assigning the weavers a permanent adviser to help them with their day-to-day issues after the sessions are completed. A marketing plan has been developed to consider the P’s of marketing, namely, Product, Promotion, Price, People, and Process. The proposed approach moves away from traditional marketing methods and toward e-marketing, eliminating intermediaries, connecting artists with clients, and providing many alternatives for craftspeople (Garg et al., 2021).

Objectives

The following are the objectives of this research:

- To know about the trends in using traditional and digital platforms among women artisans.
- To identify the avenues and suggest strategies for adopting digital platforms among the women artisans.

Study Area

The state of Manipur is the focus of this investigation. Manipur, one of the eight north-eastern Indian states known as the ‘eight sisters’, literally means ‘jewelled land’. Manipur’s rich customs and cultural legacy, as well as its art forms, handlooms, and handicrafts, are all well-known. Manipur’s people are excellent at creating beautiful handicrafts. The Department of Commerce and Industry of Manipur has been prudently prioritising projects with the primary aims of raising the morale of handicraft workers, increasing the productivity of crafts with broad marketability, and perpetuating traditions. Manipur’s marketplaces are the most outstanding venues to see glimpses of Manipur’s rich past through its exquisite art and handicrafts. The State’s Ema Bazaar is one of

India's largest women-run markets. Handloom and handicraft products are primarily sold in this market. In the entire north-eastern region, Manipur has the most significant number of handicrafts units and the highest number of craftspeople, including skilled and semi-skilled artisans. In Manipur, there are a total of 98,051 handicraft units that employ 3,79,998 craftspeople.

Methodology

The research entitled 'Blended Traditional and Digital Marketing for Empowering Women Artisans: An Empirical Approach' has been taken up in the three valley districts, viz., the Imphal-East, Imphal-West, and Kakching of the hill state—Manipur. A sample size of 16 female artisans who were actively engaged in traditional and digital marketing have been purposively selected as respondents of the study. The inquiry strives to study the pattern of usage of traditional and digital marketing platforms for the sale of handloom and handicraft products by the women artisans of the State. The study formulated fifteen (15) questions/statements and descriptive statistics to draw insights from the stimuli used in the study's questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

The empirical study employs visual and tabular data analyses. As supported by the Sankey diagram in Figure 5.1 and Table 5.1 data, it could be unveiled that 6, 3, and 7 respondents have been selected from the Imphal-West, Imphal-East, and Kakching districts of the state—Manipur. A very high percentage of 93.75 of the respondents sold their online and offline products and had smartphones with them. Cent per cent (100) of the respondents used social media platforms to communicate with their enterprises. The highest percentage of respondents, about 56, used all the common social media platforms, viz., 'WhatsApp', 'Facebook', and 'Instagram'. Also, the same percentage of respondents utilised the platforms for business purposes. Further, the majority of 62.50 per cent of the respondents reported that they used either 'GooglePay', 'PhonePe', or 'PayTm' for digital payments in their business.

A very high percentage of about 81.25 of the respondents expressed their convenience in using the digital/social media platform connected to their enterprises. Exactly 50 per cent of the respondents shared that they sought help using digital/social media platforms. A considerable percentage of 43.75 of the respondents expressed that their family members helped use the digital/social media platform. It has been reported that 'Home' and 'Shops' were the primary mechanism of the sale in offline mode as expressed by 31.25 per cent and 18.75 per cent of the respondents, respectively. Incredibly, the study exposed that the majority of 62.50 per cent of the respondents did not support either the state or central governments. About 37 per cent of the respondents prompted that they are not satisfied with the government initiatives in selling handloom and

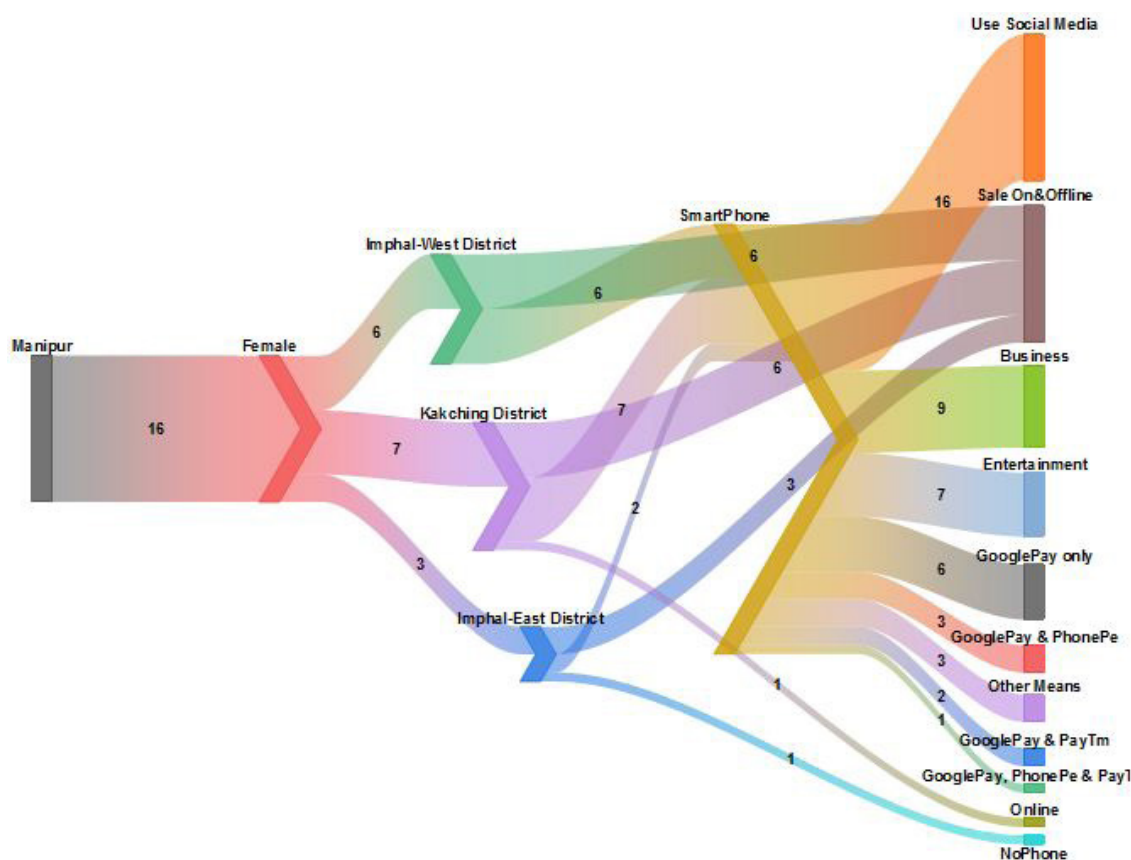


Figure 5.1: Sankey Chart specifying the distribution of data with respect to selected attributes—'State', 'Gender', 'District', 'Type of Phone', 'Usages of Phone', and 'Mode of Payment'

handicraft products. A very significant percentage, i.e. 87.50, of the respondents, reported having attended training programmes in relation to their enterprises initiated by the government. As many as three-fourths of the respondents (75 per cent) expressed their satisfaction with attending the training sessions. The study could divulge that a considerable percentage of 37.50 of the respondents were very confident in performing their enterprises after attending the training sessions.

Table 5.1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents with Respect to Stimuli of Study

S. No.	Questions/Statements	Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	In which mode do you sell the product?	Offline	0	0
		Online	1	6.25
		Both	15	93.75
Total			16	100

S. No.	Questions/Statements	Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
2.	Which mobile phone are you using?	Basic Phone	0	0
		Smart Phone	15	93.75
		No Answer	1	6.25
	Total		16	100
3.	Do you use social media platforms?	Yes	16	100
		No	0	0
	Total		16	100
4.	Which social media platforms have you used?	Only WhatsApp	2	12.50
		Only Facebook	0	0
		Only Instagram	0	0
		Both WhatsApp and Facebook	4	25.00
		All WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram	9	56.25
		Others	1	6.25
	Total		16	100
5.	For what purpose do you use social media platforms?	Entertainment	7	43.75
		Business	9	56.25
	Total		16	100
6.	Which digital payments do you use for your business?	Single Option (either of GooglePay, PhonePe, and Paytm)	10	62.50
		Double Option	5	31.25
		Triple Option	1	6.25
	Total		16	100
7.	Is it convenient for you in using digital/social media platforms?	Yes	13	81.25
		No	0	0
		Sometimes	3	18.75
	Total		16	100
8.	Do you take any help with using digital/social media platforms?	Yes	8	50.00
		No	5	31.25
		Sometimes	3	18.75
	Total		16	100
9.	Who helps you in using digital/social media platforms?	Self	4	25.00
		Family Members	7	43.75
		Middlemen/Agent	0	0
		Middlemen/Agents and Others	1	6.25
		Self, Family Members, Middlemen/Agents	1	6.25
		No information	3	18.75
	Total		16	100

S. No.	Questions/Statements	Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
10.	When your mechanism of sale is offline, mention its mode?	Home	5	31.25
		Market Place	1	6.25
		Shops	3	18.75
		Exhibition	1	6.25
		Home, Market Place	1	6.25
		Home, Market Place, Exhibitions	1	6.25
		Market Place, Shops	1	6.25
		Shops and Exhibition	1	6.25
		All	2	12.50
Total			16	100
11.	Do you use any government support?	Yes	6	37.50
		No	10	62.50
Total			16	100
12.	Are you satisfied with the government initiatives in selling the products?	Yes	5	31.25
		No	6	37.5
		Partially	2	12.5
		No Information	3	18.75
Total			16	100
13.	Have you attended any training programme organised by the government?	Yes	14	87.50
		No	2	12.50
Total			16	100
14.	Are you satisfied with the training session?	Yes	12	75.00
		No	1	6.25
		To some extend	0	0
		No Information	3	18.75
Total			16	100
15.	How much confident you are after attending the training session? (Between the scale of 1 [Not Confident] to 5 [Very Confident])	1	0	0
		2	0	0
		3	2	12.50
		4	2	12.50
		5	6	37.50
		No information	3	18.75
Total			16	100

Feedback and Suggestions

- **Artisan Friendly Policies:** To bring the women artisans on the mainstream marketing where they can directly sell their produce as well as to promote the digital marketing among the artisan community, there is a need to re-look the existing policies concerning traditional marketing support and welfare schemes to encourage them to use digital platforms, etc. The policies should be customised to incentivise women artisans for using digital platforms.
- **Accessibility and Affordability of Digital Infra and Connectivity:** The success of all the efforts towards promoting digital platforms would be effective unless there is accessibility and affordability of ordinary citizens and women artisans on digital infrastructure, connectivity, and communication networks which are the basic necessity. The government's focus should provide Wi-Fi for all and low-cost smartphones so that more citizens from remote areas can also use the power of digital technologies.
- **Trust in Digital Environment and Safeguards from Cyber Fraud:** Due to the increase in cyber fraud and crime, ordinary citizens, especially women and senior citizens, hesitate to come on the digital platform. There is a need to have a proper cyber protection law and policies against cyber frauds. Apart from the same, the common citizens who are also the buyers of the products and artisans should be made aware of the tips to protect against cyber frauds. The trust needs to be built in women artisans by using digital platforms for selling handicraft products online and using social media to market the products.
- **Awareness Creation and Promotion of Digital Platforms Among Women Artisans:** It is observed that a large number of women artisans are not fully aware of the potential and the process of using digital platforms for marketing their products. There is a need for the promotion of various means of digital platforms and ways to use these platforms for marketing handicraft products among women artisans. Innovative ways to share information among women artisans in their local languages.
- **Capacity Building on the Use of Digital Platforms for Marketing:** Frequent capacity building programmes need to be organised in small groups for women artisans to provide them with hands-on training on e-commerce platforms, digital marketing, online payment applications, and fundamental laws of using digital platforms. Apart from the same, capacity building programmes are also required for women artisans to make them know the market trends, potential market, demand of consumers, etc.
- **User-Friendly Interfaces for Easy Operation:** The basic necessity for the success of any digital platform among women artisans is to make the application interface very simple, user-friendly, and in local languages. This will encourage tech-savvy women and not very much conversant with the English language.

- **Hand-holding of Women Artisans for Onboarding and Product Upload:** There is a requirement of hand-holding of women artisans in on-boarding themselves on any digital platform along with their products. There are several activities like uploading of products, images, product descriptions, keywords, etc., which can attract the consumer to purchase the product of the women artisan. For this, they need hand-holding support for some time. Also, there should be helpline support where they can connect at any time and get the technical expertise at their convenience.
- **Government Support for End-to-End Supply Chain Management:** The women artisans are spread across the country and their produce is also in minimal quantity. There is a need to cater to them with an end-to-end supply chain from providing them raw materials to skills to finished products, including packaging, branding and advertisement, on-boarding on a digital platform, and transportation of products to the destination. The government agencies may create an integrated platform where all the support will be available for the women artisans.
- **Blended Traditional and Digital Marketing:** Even though the women artisans are well-versed with the traditional marketing strategies, the situation of COVID-19 has forced them to re-look and re-think the effective use of digital marketing strategies for their livelihood enhancement. So there is an urgent need to balance both the marketing strategies. According to the need of the hour, they are blending traditional and digital marketing that will help in the empowerment of women artisans.

Conclusion

In the recent past, many e-commerce portals and digital marketing channels have been introduced by private and government initiatives to remove the middlemen and enhance the market outreach for the artisans engaged in the handicraft sector. But due to a lack of knowledge, skill, and trust in digital marketing platforms, the women artisans are far from availing of the potential benefits of digital marketing platforms. There is also a need for capacity building of women artisans for onboarding on various digital platforms, including social media and e-commerce platforms. Apart from this, the end-to-end supply chain management of handicraft products needs to be re-looked, policies need to be customised to make it more artisan-friendly, and the trustworthiness on digital platforms needs to be built among citizens (buyers) and artisans (sellers).

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Skill Development Practices and Promotion of Inclusivity Among Informal Women Workforce: The Case of Self-employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad

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Abstract

National Policy on Skill Development 2009 emphasized skill development for the informal sector to achieve inclusivity. Self employed Women's Association (SEWA) is an Ahmedabad-based trade union, operating since 1972, and is actively engaged in skill development practices to enhance livelihood opportunities for women in the informal sector, thereby promoting inclusivity. There is limited literature available on reviewing the skill development practices that are being followed to promote inclusivity among the informal women workforce. This paper is an attempt to elicit, understand, and review the skill development practices promoting inclusivity at SEWA, through a case study approach.

Keywords: *Inclusivity, Skill Development, Informal Women Workforce, Sustainable Livelihood, SEWA, Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLPR)*

Introduction

According to catalyst.org, the population of India as of July 2020, stands at 1.326 billion, out of which 48.1 per cent are women. But in terms of workforce participation with respect to the total workforce, they account only for 19.9 per cent. Even the 2019 data from the World Bank confirm that the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLPR) in India for 2019 stood at 20.8 per cent, when compared to 30.27 per cent in 1990, showcasing a huge gender disparity in terms of workforce composition. This World Bank report also highlights that situation remained the same in the formal workforce as well with FLPR in August 2020 recorded less than 20 per cent. So, with these figures,

the inclusivity of women in the total workforce becomes a big challenge. The challenge gets even tougher with the informal women workforce.

The informal workforce, unlike the formal workforce, doesn't get regular income and other job-related benefits. They only get paid in terms of wages as and when they are employed. Hence, they are not secured by any wage or employment contracts. According to Rahil Rangwala (2018), it is so because of their low levels of literacy and lack of exposure to formal training to gain skills.

According to the joint report of What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy and Institute of Social Studies Trust, India has the largest informal workforce. The percentage of its total workforce is employed in the informal sector. Adhikari (2014) found that in most developing nations, the informal workforce is playing a crucial role in economic well-being. In India, the majority of the employment is in the agriculture sector. But this sector is so overcrowded it forced the workforce to rely more on the informal economy than the formal economy, though the government's policies are aimed at developing employment in the formal economy.

The female workforce employed in the informal sector is around 96 million. According to the periodic labour force survey of 2018-19, the composition of the workforce based on the nature of the job, their proportion, and underlying income levels is as follows (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Composition of Workforce in India

S. No.	Workforce	Proportion (%)	Income (Average) (Rs)	Observation
1.	Regular Formal Jobs	Less than 10	26,000 per month	Above decent minimum wage
2.	Regular Informal Jobs	Around 14	9,500 per month	Centred around minimum wage
3.	Self-employed	50	8,400 per month	Less than minimum wage
4.	Casual Workers	24	209 per day	Very low than the minimum wage with poor regular employment prospects

Source: Compiled by the authors from the excerpts of Periodic Labour Force Survey (2018-19)

With respect to casual workers, 40 per cent of their employment opportunities are in the agriculture and construction sectors.

Need for Skill Development Among Informal Workforce in India

India has one of the largest working populations in the age group of 21-50 years. But not every person in the said age group is employed. That's why apart from establishing industries and educational institutions and making investments in infrastructure, India is focusing on improving the skills of the employable population so that they can directly

contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the economy. But it becomes a gigantic task for the government to take up this skill development activity completely on its own. There should be participation from private sectors, Non-government Organisations (NGOs), and cooperatives to make skill development a successful activity. Research by Magidi (2021) found that ‘the informal economy is also playing an equally important part in providing skills, especially to the disadvantaged groups of society’ in Zimbabwe. The situation is no different in India. One such entity which is actively engaged in skill development programme among the informal workforce is Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA). Through its training programmes SEWA is promoting inclusivity by bringing a large informal women workforce into the employable strata. According to Srinivas Reddy (2020), Chief of the ILO Skills and Employability Branch, inclusivity can be promoted only when the employment and income levels of the informal workforce are improved.

The research paper attempts to highlight the contribution of India’s largest trade union SEWA, which is based in Ahmedabad, towards the training, development, and employment of the informal women workforce in India.

Self Employed Women’s Association

Self Employed Women’s Association is a Central Trade Union that was established in 1972. It has been established to organise self-employed women workers in the informal economy so that more women can be included in the workforce and self-reliance can be promoted among them. The success of SEWA lies in organising economic enterprises like cooperatives. That’s why it pioneered capacity building in terms of the informal workforce across 16 states with more than 1.5 million as its members. SEWA started organising self-employed women waste recyclers in 1975 and adopted a developmental approach as the self-employed women waste recyclers (Geetanjali), and Rachaita (construction) most poor and downtrodden of all informal trade groups. Till date, SEWA is the single largest women worker’s central trade union in India.

According to the skills specialist Hofmann (2020), the acquisition of skills in the informal workforce comes with great difficulties, especially for women. Unaffordable the training costs limiting their access, fear of losing income during training period, and poor foundational skills on account of illiteracy deprive the informal workforce to get skilled and gain employment opportunities thereafter. The training programmes of SEWA precisely address this concern and try to promote inclusivity among the informal women workforce. This paper focuses on eliciting the skill development programmes taken up by SEWA through its Rachaita Cooperative to promote inclusivity.

Rachaita Cooperative

In 2001, when the earthquake struck Ahmedabad, which happened to be the epicentre of business activity in Gujarat, there was a huge need for construction labour for reconstruction and restoration activity. Also, there was no requirement for literacy levels to get employed in this activity but the demand for construction labour was huge when the Indian economy started booming in the early 2000s. It was then the SEWA team thought that a separate cooperative should be formed to organise the informal women workforce, whose focus remains only on employment in construction activity. After doing all the groundwork and obtaining the needful approvals from the regulatory authorities, Shree Rachaita Bandhkam Mahila Sewa Sahakari Mandli Limited (commonly referred to as Rachaita) was formed in 2005. Since then more than 2000 people have been trained and were given the necessary skills to secure employment in the field of construction. Till date, there are around 500 women workforce who are a part of this cooperative and take up the jobs as and when they receive the construction contracts.

The registered workforce at Rachaita offers the following services:

1. Material shifting
2. Plastering
3. Plumbing
4. Bricklaying
5. Fitting of China Mosaic
6. Finishing and after construction work
7. Cleaning work (housekeeping)

Apart from the registered members, the Cooperative is managed by the team which is as follows (Figure 6.1):

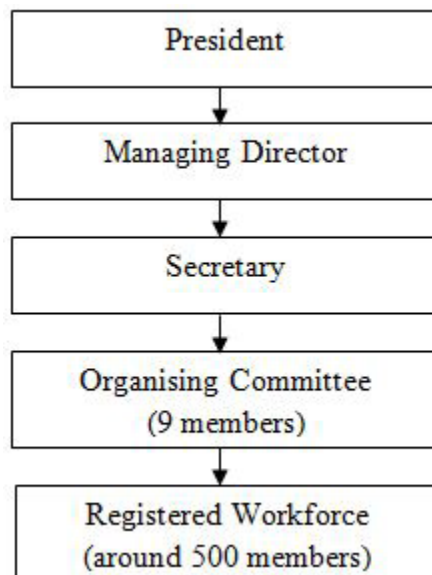


Figure 6.1: Organisation Structure of Rachaita**Skill Development Process at Rachaita**

At Rachaita, skill development is taken up for those people who register themselves with them. The members are supposed to pay a monthly membership fee of Rs. 10. But the training is offered only to 100 members every year. The training is offered by the members of Rachaita who are highly experienced and already working as construction workers. So there has never been an issue with respect to trainers.

The training offered is a completely on-the-job training process in a classroom kind of set-up. The necessary support required for training is offered by the Indian construction major Larsen and Toubro, as a part of its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. The training lasts for 2 months and the trainees are paid Rs 200 a day to sustain themselves during the training period. Once the training is completed a test is organised to assess the learning of the trainees. Grades are awarded to the trainees with a certificate and it is these grades that determines the daily wage a worker can earn.

The training process majorly caters to the domestic construction process and technology. However, the trainers are sent to foreign countries based on the emerging processes and technologies in the Indian construction industry. One such training was given to the trainer who was sent to The Netherlands for 21 days. The trainer, in turn, imparts the learning he acquired to fellow trainers at Rachaita so that the workforce remains equipped with the latest construction processes.

Employment Prospects Post-training

The labour trained by Rachaita are employed in various construction sites or they become contractors over a period of time and hire the workers. Some of the workers post-training, stay with Rachaita as members and take up the employment that is showcased by them.

In the initial stages of employment owning the tools required for construction needs a significant amount of money, considering their economic standards. So a tools library has been formed by Rachaita with a good spread of construction tools required by workers. The members of Rachaita can hire them on a nominal rent daily. These tools can take on rent in the morning and should be returned in the evening.

The pictures of the workforce trained by Rachaita, when they were working live at the construction sites are given in Plates 6.1 on next page.

Initial Challenges Faced by the Women Workforce

The traditional dresses worn by the women workforce earlier were sarees that limited them in performing complex work activities at the construction sites. This dressing limitation no longer remained an issue when they started wearing churidars. The change



Plate 6.1: Members of Rachaita working performing construction related works

in dressing could not only help them in performing complex tasks but also helped them in earning equal pay along with the male workforce.

Hailing from the land of Mahatma Gandhi, as a tribute to his philosophy of Swadesi, the members wear khadi. It is not mandated but the members follow this custom out of respect for the legendary leader of India.

Marketing of Training Programme Offered by Rachaita

Self Employed Women's Association as a whole employs 77 campaign teams to spread awareness about the training programmes it offers. These campaign teams visit the rural areas, promote SEWAs training programmes, understand their training needs based on their education, family history, and other aspects and communicate the same to the SEWA training team. SEWA then organises training programmes for needy people accordingly.

Welfare Initiatives

Self Employed Women's Association offers its members a good number of welfare initiatives. Prominent among them are mentioned as under:

1. Free education for children
2. Promotion of financial literacy and well-being
3. Counselling support

Free Education to Children

Self Employed Women's Association believes that illiteracy has been one of the causes of unemployment and poverty. While training the illiterate informal workforce, SEWA provides access to free education to children of its members from Class 1 to Class 12 so that the next generation is better equipped in terms of literacy and skills to gain access to bright employment opportunities.

Promotion of Financial Literacy and Well-being

Self Employed Women's Association through their banking cooperative Shree Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank Limited facilitates its members to save a part of their hard-earned money which provides them security for their families in the future. By doing so, SEWA is not only promoting inclusivity of women among the workforce but also financial inclusion. Most of the SEWA members have operating savings account in Shree Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank Limited and they know how to operate debit cards at ATMs.

Also, during the Covid days, when the employment opportunities were low, SEWA provided them subsidised loans at a nominal interest so that their members could run their families till the Covid situation normalised.

Counselling Support

Research supports that the informal women workforce is subjected to domestic violence, especially the exploitation of hard-earned money by their husbands. At times the informal women workforce registered with SEWA is not allowed by their husbands and family members to come out and work. In those situations, SEWA provides counselling to the husbands and family members of its registered members so that their access to employment and financial resources remains intact.

Why Does Informal Female Workforce Join Rachaita?

In October 2020, SEWA and IWWAGE jointly published a report that highlighted the woes of women employed in the informal sector. According to the Report, gender disparity, job insecurity, low and unstable earnings, poor bargaining power, and low status are the major issues that adversely impact the participation and growth of the informal women workforce. The research of Basole (2021) too found that the women workforce doesn't get their due share of social respect they deserve. SEWA through Rachaita addresses all these concerns like:

Respect

Earlier women's workforce used to stand at the labour sites where the construction houses or contractors frequently visit and hire the workforce. But standing at the labour sites could not provide a platform to get meaningful employment. And by standing at labour sites they were not treated with the dignity and respect they deserved. Their association with Rachaita provided them the much-needed social status and respect.

Continuous Employment

The members of Rachaita were never a dearth of employment opportunities. They keep receiving construction contracts regularly and could employ all of its members continuously. In case of any lean period in terms of employment, the members are now so skilled and confident that they keep taking up small construction and repair works to sustain their livelihoods.

Better Wages

When the informal women workforce was standing at labour sites earlier hardly they had any bargaining power. There was a huge wage gap when compared to men. Also, on

account of competition and disintegration among labour force, they could not get their due share of their wages as the competition was high. Associating with Rachaita gave them a platform to stand against gender disparity and exploitation of labour for petty wages. Apart from that, Rachaita gave them a sense of security, and decent employment prospects that helped them in improving their financial security and standards of living.

Till date, all the members of Rachaita, based on their work experience and skill level, earn not less than Rs 500 to 650 per day. Whereas in India, Rs 176 is the minimum wage that has been set for performing an 8-hour job. By associating with Rachaita, the members could earn income way above the minimum wage. According to an ILO Report, the wages of informal workers in India, on account of Covid fell drastically by 22.6 per cent. But the members of Rachaita, through their strong association, couldn't feel this impact.

Thus, SEWA through Rachaita could bring a significant change in the lives of the informal women workforce.

Conclusion

Literacy levels in India are still slightly above 60 per cent. Getting access to formal education becomes difficult for the poor, downtrodden, and people coming from select social strata. On account of the same, it becomes very difficult to provide employment opportunities to these people in the formal sectors, where the needful qualifications for the job are high. But it becomes imperative on the part of the government to come out with skill development programmes to include the underprivileged in the employable strata. Considering the limitations on the part of the government to include the majority of the informal workforce in the employable strata, cooperatives like Rachaita (SEWA) are playing a key role in improving employment prospects through their skill development programmes. They stand as an example to many who wish to become successful cooperatives like them.

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Socio-psychological Challenges Faced by Indian Women in Balancing Work and Family in the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Work-Life Balance (WLB) is defined as ‘an employee’s effort towards accomplishing both the work and life role successfully such that the roles of one domain do not have any adverse effect on the other’ (Parkes and Langford, 2008). The Pandemic COVID-19 has laid before us many challenges, particularly for Indian women with respect to sustaining their jobs as well as being the nurturer on the home front. Various studies (Alon et al., 2020) and media reports (Ascher, 2020) have demonstrated the challenges and difficulties of working women’s WLB since this Pandemic seems to have exacerbated traditional gender stereotypes and inequalities in families and societies. Maintaining a balance between work and household chores is not only an area of concern but also a very important domain due to the contemporary, demographic, technological, market, and organisational changes associated with it. The patriarchal cultural milieu lays forth the dual responsibilities for working women. Women are looked upon as caregivers and provide socio-psychological support to the family. The financial support provided by her is often ignored, undermined, and less talked of. While at the professional front as well she keeps juggling, matching the performance indicators, giving her best, and striving to keep up on all the fronts. Her efforts as an employee, her sincerity towards work, and her basic empathetic nature is often ignored and labelled as ‘weak’ and ‘incompetent’. The paper intends to present an overview of the problems faced by working women during the Pandemic, problems of negligence, and deprivation of women’s identity and their quest for selfhood and respect in the domestic and professional domains. It shall suggest some changes and strategies be developed on both fronts to give her space and voice without compromising her self-esteem and assertion.

Introduction

With the technological developments and India emerging as a world leader in various fields, independence of women, assertion, realisation, and acknowledgement of

capabilities of women are the prime areas that draw our attention and need to be addressed. The economic and social development of any nation largely depends on the coordination of men and women and their participation in the workforce and development of the country. In our patriarchal setup, the major responsibility of women has been perceived to be the maintenance of the family including home and childcare and breadwinning was the main responsibility of men. However, with more and more women entering the workforce and pursuing careers, these clearly defined gender roles were forced to change (Sevim, 2006). Most women do not have responsibility only in one domain anymore; they have to balance the competing demands of both work and family domains (Biçaksız, 2009). As is rightly said work and family are the two most important aspects of people's lives and, contrary to the initial belief that they are distinct parts of life; these domains are closely related (Ford et al., 2007). Women, today are emerging as change-makers and successful career managers in every field be it defense, teaching, politics, media, administration, corporate sector, engineering, space, or research. Despite the hurdles, they can surge their way through and make a locality for themselves. The patriarchal set-up has though laid forth the way for a woman to proceed but it seems that she has to pay a heavy price for her economic, social, and emotional independence. The saying 'there are no free lunches' seems to befit in today's scenario. Getting up early in the morning, taking care of the household needs, and sacrificing her comfort for the sake of the family are the common things that a woman does but her dutifulness is often ignored. It is treated as the price that she pays for moving out of the family and entering the professional world. Whether a woman is playing the role of a conventional daughter-in-law or meeting out the dual roles of a working woman—balancing the professional and family front, she faces a conflict within which she is unable to share. Most women try to confine themselves to their world and are reluctant to share their anxieties or stress with others as they feel that this would lead to loss of face and an inability of handling the situations. These further mount to her emotional and social unbalance and adversely affect her mental and physical health.

Work-Life Balance and COVID-19

Women traditionally have been associated with homemaking and child-rearing but with the growing needs of the family, awareness of women about their potential due to education, and several other factors women can be seen not just as family supporters but also as the bread-earners. There has been a paradigm shift in the roles and responsibilities of women but with that has also come the socio-psychological challenges which she faces and quietly endures so that everything else can go about smoothly. The work-family interface has attracted research attention as the traditional family roles have undergone significant changes due to women getting employed outside the home (Aycan and Eskin, 2005). Women are the caregivers and have been associated with multitasking as well. It

is observed that though multiple roles in work and family can be the source of multiple satisfaction for employed women (Crosby, 1987), a combination of career and family roles is often associated with conflict, overload, and stress (Frone, et al., 1991; 1992; Lewis and Cooper). Women are expected to effectively manage their multiple roles in domestic as well as professional lives. She handles the challenges of the professional life, manages the household chores of cooking, takes care of children, and other social responsibilities and these are still considered to be the sole duty of a woman only.

The disasters that emerged before the COVID pandemic affected women in a very different way as compared to this time. Earlier women used to reduce their working hours or for the time being, and they stepped down from their job (Andrew et al., 2020), but this Pandemic brought the compulsion of complete lockdown where especially working women with their multiple roles such as wife, mother, and daughter-in-law had to perform all the household activities along with their paid job (Andrew et al., 2020; Carlson et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2021; Craig and Churchill, 2021; Hennekam and Shymko, 2020; Manzo and Minello, 2020; Qian and Fuller, 2020). Now along with maintaining their jobs, they were also working as full-time homemakers. It was especially more difficult for working women as during the lockdown period there were no helpers for them and they had to manage the professional and domestic front all alone. Men generally do not offer any help in household work. The stress that the working women undergo in maintaining a balance between both worlds is beyond words. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) reported that the stressors, not only affect major life events but also encompass ongoing minor events like electricity failure, the maid not turned up, unexpected guests, and child's misbehaviour. It may sound very trivial or petty matter at the onset but for the working woman managing these things along with her job is pretty difficult. Apart from the physical stress she also undergoes mental, emotional, and psychological stress in managing these situations. In the opinion of Frone et al. (1992), combination of career and family roles is often associated with conflict, overload, and stress. Baue (2006) studied that stressed working women suffer from many problems like more illness, medicine intake, anxiety, and depression. The work-family pressure aggravates the need to maintain a balance leading to work-family spillover. 'Work-family spillover' is a result of the performing multiple roles and this will be accused when the demands from family and home life, interfere with women's ability to perform effectively in the workplace. Having to juggle multiple roles and the effect of the pressures from work on one's attitude and behaviour within the family also may lead to 'work-family spillover' (Younkin, 2010). The satisfaction in life and happiness are also adversely affected because of it as women are constantly occupied with these thoughts and the happiness that is required to keep the life going seems to deter. It was also found that doing a demanding job and managing family and social life simultaneously is notoriously difficult. It is generally women who take the primary responsibility for childcare and

who, in situations of conflict, adjust their working lives to accommodate family pressures (Wajcman, 1981; Falkenberg and Monachello, 1990).

Workplace Challenges and the Lockdown

The workplace too has sometimes been referred to as an inhospitable place for women due to the multiple forms of gender inequalities present (Abrams, 1991). Discrimination and biased behaviour at the workplace are some of the common factors that women face and are the causes of dissatisfaction and unhappiness. The disadvantages of lower pay, subjugated status, opportunities at work, and the subjective experiences of being stigmatised, affect women's psychological and physical stress as well as mental and physical health (Goldenhar et al., 1998; Adler et al., 2000; Schmader et al., 2008; Borrel et al., 2010), job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Hicks-Clarke and Iles, 2000), and ultimately, their overall performance (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001).

It is a glaring observation that in organisations with more formal job ladders that are used to dictate and constrain workers' promotion opportunities, women are less likely to advance (Perry et al., 1994). This occurs because job ladders tend to be divided by gender, and as such, gender job segregation that is seen at entry-level positions will be strengthened as employees move up their specific ladder with no opportunity to cross into other lines of advancement. Thus, women will lack particular job experiences that are not available within their specific job ladders, making them unqualified for advancement (De Pater et al., 2010). This strategically undermines the performance of women and segregates them from the mainstream.

It is a proven fact that women are able managers due to their meticulousness and eye for perfection yet the authorities are doubtful whether women would be able to handle male subordinates, take independent decisions, cope with crises, and manage their duties properly (Andal, 2002). Even though women prove their efficiency, authorities think twice before promoting them and even if women are given the chance, there is always a comment that they were given the position because they were women and this remark itself keeps questioning their capability and efficiency time and again. This inequality demotivates women and despite giving their best they feel dejected and helpless. This mindset is a challenge and difficult for women to handle and it adds to her misery in the form of occupational stress and hampers not just the job performance but the physical and mental health of the person as well. Occupational stress is a chronic condition caused by a situation in the workplace that may negatively affect an individual's job performance and overall wellbeing (Yahaya et al., 2009). The occupational stress for women also grew during the COVID situation wherein she had to time and again prove her worth and balance the workplace and family issues. The social norms expect and compel women to take care of the unpaid job at home. Right from childhood, they are conditioned to be complacent and take care of the family needs. A large section of women in India has to

bear the burden of the domestic unpaid work in their homes due to their less participation in paid job. A World Bank Report on female labour force participation in India mentions that their participation has fallen by almost 30 per cent during the last 20 years (Kamdar, 2020). With the closure of schools and colleges, the online learning format engaged all the students and even the mothers of younger children. In most cases, mothers and in a few, fathers accompanied and sat with their children, especially with younger ones for the online classes and trained them in this newly emerged model of schooling. Helping the child do well and develop an understanding of the online mode came as an additional responsibility to the women's already overflowing kitty of the domestic and professional responsibilities she had been undertaking. Working women have been subjected to tremendous changes and upheaval due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Amongst other challenges, attaining satisfactory WLB is one of the key challenges working women face as they have to perform a disproportionate number of domestic roles. In India, before the arrival of Corona and lockdown, women were at least having some support in terms of domestic servants, but the change emerged, with the complete shutdown, in the quantum of work of women, though it did not affect men's working arrangements in the same way. Researchers have revealed that majorly women in almost all the countries have to spend more time on housework than before and they are the ones who had to bear with all this additional amount of work. Even the results of the study done by Boca et al., 2020 (with the question to know the impact of lockdown during COVID-19 among couples where both partners are working) also revealed that all the additional household and childcare work during that period fell on women more, although men too helped but their help was majorly restricted to childcare activities and especially for their education. In almost every society, household responsibilities and housework are the onus of the women in the family. (Boca et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 lockdown brought more uncertainties to their career prospects resulting in anxiety, sleeplessness, and irritation. The lockdown period has been one of the most challenging times during this COVID-19 pandemic. Every crisis also brings several health issues such as stress, permanent feeling of exhaustion, and isolation. Some studies reported that informal chats, handshakes, and meetings in the workplace are important for mental and physical well-being. (Mogilner, et al., 2018; Schroder, et al., 2019). But as these things were missing, they added to the insecurity, stress, and socio-psychological well-being of women. COVID-19 pandemic-related measures, such as prolonged periods of social isolation, unexpected employment disruptions, school closures, financial distress, and changes to routine had an unprecedented negative impact on women's mental well-being (UN). Stress has been recognised as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease mainly in women. Stress and depression are associated with inflammation and depression of the immune system, factors that are involved in both COVID-19 and cardiovascular disease. (Mattioli, et al., 2019). Living in these difficult times further added to the emotional and psychological stress of women which was indeed difficult to cope with. The family

responsibilities coupled with the workplace pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic impeded the working woman from thinking about herself and she thus fell prey to the socio-psychological stress.

Conclusion

Considering the multifaceted nature of the life of interventions to improve the quality of life must be multidimensional and use physical, psychosocial, and emotional aspects to encourage people to return to a healthy life. This action needs to be stronger for women who have suffered to a higher degree from the inevitable restrictions and economic crisis following the COVID-19 pandemic.

To maintain the balance formal family-friendly Human Resource (HR) policies can be adopted. For instance, to reduce work-family conflict, organisations can implement HR policies such as flexible work arrangements, which involve flexible schedules, telecommuting, compressed work weeks, job-shares, and part-time work (Galinsky et al., 2008). In conjunction with other family-friendly policies, such as the provision of childcare, elderly care, and paid maternity leave, organisations can work to reduce stress and improve the retention of working mothers (Burke, 2002). Empathy, trust, and care should also be included in the WLB parameters at the workplace to help women fight their insecurities and strengthen them mentally and emotionally.

Finally, women must be appreciated for the care and concern and the additional responsibilities she undertakes just to keep their family happy and contented. The workplaces should be harassment-free and gender-sensitive. An attitudinal change within families should also be there to make household chores more participative. Women must be encouraged in totality to build an independent identity outside the confines of their homes, thus paving way for truer choice.

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Women's Careers in Management: Confronted Problems and Approved Practices

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Abstract

Gender equality has not been achieved anywhere in the world. One persistent, global challenge is that women struggle to advance to management positions in the workplace. This chapter focuses on the area of management as it relates to women's careers. Well-known metaphors that highlight the complexity of the problems women face in their careers are presented. Additionally, two examples of practices that can be helpful to the advancement of women's careers, namely, all-women management development programmes and work-family arrangements are discussed. It is concluded that although there has been progress around women's moving in managerial roles in many places over the years, much still needs to be done now and in the future to overcome the barriers women face in achieving their career goals.

Keywords: *Barrier, Career, Equality, Management, Metaphor, Organisation, Woman*

Introduction

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2021) showed that gender equality has not been achieved anywhere in the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased barriers to building inclusive societies and economies. In particular, the gender gap in labour force participation, to the benefit of men, has widened since the outbreak of the Pandemic. In the Report it is argued that closing the overall gender gap will now take about 135 years; before the Pandemic, it was about 100 years.

Several studies, as well as real-life evidence, have revealed that it is important to advance women's participation in the labour market. Drawing on the business case argument, for society, organisations, and individuals to prosper and succeed economically, full use of women's competencies, know-how, and talents are needed (Hearn et al., 2015; The Global Gender Gap, 2021). As Powell and Butterfield (2015) stated, it is unwise for organisations to constrain people's career opportunities on the basis of features that are not relevant to the job.

Moreover, from an ethical viewpoint, ending discrimination against women is a human right and essential for a sustainable future (The Sustainable Development Goals, 2015). According to the principle of social justice (Greenberg, 1990), it is not fair for women to be treated as a group and have their access to management roles limited due to their membership in this group. The aim of social justice is the equal participation of all groups in a community and to create an inclusive society that strengthens people's agency and their ability to live a meaningful life, and to pursue a career that they value (Robeyns, 2005). Thus, agency among women and opportunities to pursue careers in management are needed to advance women's participation in work life. Finally, it is important for an organisation's reputation that it considers candidates fairly and recruits the best talent (Powell and Butterfield, 2015).

In this chapter, the focus is on women's careers in the area of management. First, based on previous literature, an overview of some metaphors is provided that highlight and help to understand the complexity of the problems around women advancing in the area of management. Second, drawing mainly from the research results, two examples of practices are presented that can support women in having a career in management. The first example deals with all-women management skills development and looks at the perspective of an individual woman and her competency development. The second example relates to work-family arrangements and an organisation's views on the topic.

Metaphors for the Problems Women Face Regarding Managerial Careers

In the literature, women's problems in advancing in managerial careers are often described using various metaphors. The metaphors of 'glass ceiling', 'glass labyrinth', and 'glass cliff' are the most well-known (Morrison et al., 1987; Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Eagly and Carli, 2007; Klenke, 2011; Ryan and Haslam, 2005, 2007; Powell and Butterfield, 2015; Carli and Eagly, 2016; Lämsä, 2022) and are therefore discussed here.

The metaphor of the *Glass Ceiling* refers to the 'unseen, yet unbreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements' (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Central characteristics of this phenomenon are that inequality cannot be explained by any job-related feature of the employee (e.g. motivation, education, etc.) other than gender and that the Glass Ceiling effect increases as employees ascend through the workplace hierarchy (Cotter et al., 2001). The Glass Ceiling metaphor describes the invisible barriers to women's (and other minorities') upward movement along the career ladder (Morrison et al., 1987; Klenke, 2011). This barrier is seen as a marker of discrimination, between men who advance in the workplace and women who do not.

According to the Theory of Gendered Organisations, Organisational Processes, practices and structures are gendered in a way that produces a distinction between

female and male, feminine and masculine (Acker, 1990). Drawing on this Theory, it can be observed that the Glass Ceiling that women face in their careers is produced in many ways, such as materially (e.g. work division, work contracts, recruitment announcements, etc.), through symbols and images (e.g. language use, ideology, dress code, etc.), and through patterns of interaction between women and men (e.g. possibility of speaking in meetings, dominance in speaking, etc.). Due to the complex and invisible nature of the barriers, it is often difficult to see, understand, and tackle them. Instead, the barriers tend to be taken as self-evident ‘truths’, and they are often considered by members of the organisation as part of everyday practices and routines, without any critical reflection on and questioning of them.

Powell and Butterfield (2015) analysed the literature on the Glass Ceiling from the 1990s. They said that explanations for the phenomenon have become more varied and multifaceted, yet the basic nature and understanding of the phenomenon have stayed the same. Powell and Butterfield stressed that in addition to organisational interventions, society-level initiatives are also needed to overcome the Glass Ceiling effect. According to Powell and Butterfield, the success of women in being promoted in their careers also depends on a government’s commitment to decisions that take into account, and aim to counteract, biases against women. So, normative regulation, particularly in the form of legislation, is a form of pressure that can advance gender equality in society in general, and which is also beneficial to women’s careers. Moreover, Powell and Butterfield asserted that explanations concerning the Glass Ceiling have moved towards a view of social systems such as organisations as gendered instead of individualistic and person-focused, which was the common perception in the past.

The *Glass Labyrinth* metaphor accepts that career barriers for women exist, but suggests that ways to overcome the barriers also exist. So, instead of representing an absolute barrier, this metaphor argues that women’s advancement in a career is possible, but that their career trajectories are more complicated and slower than men’s (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Carli and Eagly, 2016). Men are accelerated quickly through the organisational hierarchy – as described in the literature, they are on the ‘glass escalator’ (Maume, 1999). Eagly and Carli (2007) stated that the advantage of the Glass Labyrinth metaphor is that it takes into consideration the complexity of the problems that women experience in their careers. Moreover, the metaphor has a positive tone.

Discussing her experiences as an Associate Dean and a Member of the Executive Team at a business school and often the only woman in a team, Mavin (2009) stressed that for a woman to go through the Glass Labyrinth, persistence, ingenuity, intelligent analysis of the puzzles and challenges related to management, and leadership work are required. Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002), who studied business media texts about women in leadership positions, reported that one identity constructed in the texts is that of ‘a woman of cunning’, referring to a woman who wants to be successful in a career. To achieve her aims, the woman can deliberately leverage features regarded as traditionally

feminine (e.g. not criticising strongly, hiding her use of direct power, smiling, being polite, being helpful, etc.) as an indirect behavioural means of influencing others, especially men in positions of power. As a result, the men act according to the will of the woman.

Glass and Cook (2016) argued in their study that a problem that makes women's career trajectories slower than men's is gender stereotypes. One stereotype is that women, to be able to advance in a career, experiences pressure to prove to herself and others that she is more competent at handling demanding tasks and performing successfully than her male colleagues. A similar finding has also been reported in other studies (Lämsä and Hiillos, 2008; Lämsä and Savela, 2014). Furthermore, women's careers slow down because women tend to end up in jobs involving people-related 'soft' tasks (e.g. human resources management) rather than positions at the core of business and production, which are regarded as the areas where the 'hard' tasks are. It is more difficult to reach a senior position from a 'soft' role than from a 'hard' role.

According to the metaphor of the *Glass Cliff*, women are more likely than men to find themselves in managerial positions that are linked to a greater risk of failure (Ryan and Haslam, 2005). In their study, Ryan and Haslam found evidence of the glass cliff effect. These researchers showed that when a financial downturn occurred in the stock market, firms that recruited a woman as manager faced poor performance in the months before the recruitment. On the other hand, it was reported in the same study that when the situation was stable in the stock market, companies that recruited a woman performed positively.

Because there are fewer women in management positions than men, women are easily perceived as an exception to the managerial norm, which stresses masculinity. According to Bruckmüller et al. (2014), much research demonstrates that people who are regarded as atypical in a given group are more visible and likely to experience criticism. So, women in management positions tend to experience higher pressure and stricter appraisal than their male counterparts. Moreover, the Glass Cliff has been connected to the gendered nature of management. Women get positive appraisals when the responsibilities of their management roles are defined in traditionally feminine terms. However, when the roles are defined in traditionally masculine terms (e.g. as requiring assertiveness and rationality), women's effectiveness is considered to be lower than that of men (Ryan and Haslam, 2005).

Glass and Cook (2016) studied the Glass Cliff effect on the careers of women who had worked as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a Fortune 500 company. The researchers found clear evidence of the effect on women's careers. The study showed that women, compared to men in a similar position, tend to be recruited to high-risk positions and have little support to accomplish their career aims. However, Glass and Cook also found, quite contrary to the Glass Cliff phenomenon, that women themselves aspired to high-risk positions because such positions provide them with visibility and can lead to them developing a reputation as a transformational leaders and change

agents in a high-risk situation. Glass and Cook noted that women's tendency to aspire to high-risk positions is a result of women's underrepresentation in management and the resultant bias.

Examples of Practices to Advance Women's Careers

Given the problematic effects on women's careers of the phenomena illustrated by the metaphors of the Glass Ceiling, Glass Labyrinth and Glass Cliff, practices to address the problems are necessary. Based on this research, two examples of practices were selected that might assist in tackling the problems. The practices, which are introduced and discussed, are as follows:

- All-women management development programmes
- Work-family arrangements

All-women Management Development Programmes

One significant way to support women's participation in work life and career advancement is to educate women (Nussbaum, 2011). Nussbaum put forward that women's development via various kinds of educational activities is crucial and positive because education is fundamental to a successful life. Being educated contributes to women's ability to have an influence on decision-making in work as well as in community and family, and life in general (Nussbaum, 2001). Education for women has the potential to mitigate the many challenges that women face in their careers, such as discrimination, having to take jobs they are overqualified for, and so on. Education enhances imagination and develops the ability to think critically about issues from many viewpoints a critical competency in contemporary work life (Lämsä et al., 2020). The competencies gained from education are an individual's property and they cannot be taken away even if a woman changes career.

An important way to support women's career advancement via education is to support management development (Lämsä and Hiillos, 2008; Lämsä and Savela, 2014, 2019). Management development refers to a planned process to expand a person's capacity to be successful in a managerial role (McCauley and Van Velsor, 2004; Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). A qualification from a management development programme can help women to break the Glass Ceiling and move successfully through the Glass Labyrinth (Lämsä and Savela, 2014, 2019). However, one problem with management development programmes is that even though they are targeted at both women and men, the majority of the participants in them tend to be men (Simpson, 2006; Ibeh et al., 2008; Kelan and Dunkley Jones, 2010; Lämsä and Savela, 2014). So, the human resources development practices of the employing organisations that send participants to the programmes, and/or the recruitment processes of management education institutions, which provide the

development, may be gendered in a way that favours men. To overcome the problem, it is suggested that women participate in programmes specifically targeted at women (Ibeh et al., 2008; Lämsä and Hiillos, 2008; Lämsä and Savela, 2014, 2019). In recent years, such programmes have become more common; for example, some of the top business schools offer them.

Previous studies have shown that all-women management development programmes can have a positive effect on women's competencies and careers (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002; Debebe, 2011; Lämsä and Savela, 2014, 2019). A crucial point is that the programmes should not rely on the idea that women have deficiencies as managers, but instead should emphasise the development of their strengths (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002). Moreover, the programmes, which include not only traditional classroom training but also personal guidance in the form of mentoring, coaching, and counselling are effective (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002; Betz, 2006; Lämsä and Savela, 2014).

A study by Lämsä and Savela (2014) showed that all-women management development programmes improve women's competencies in planning and doing business successfully. Through the programmes, women's mastery of management language improves and the language becomes more familiar to them. The women mentioned that after completing the programme it was easier to build a clear managerial identity and be more convincing in a managerial role. Lämsä and Savela's findings lend support to the argument that an all-women context is a secure and supportive context for women's development in the area of management. The women mentioned that in this context they were able to share and discuss experiences freely, and discuss ideas and solutions related to management responsibilities, identity, and problems. All this contributed, particularly, to the advancement the women's intrapersonal and leadership skills. The women revealed that in mixed-gender groups men tend to dominate communication and that this constrains women's opportunities and willingness to speak freely in public. A study by Debebe (2011) made a similar finding, revealing that a crucial advantage of an all-women development programme is that the participants' feelings of recognition and belonging increase. Furthermore, the all-women programme was experienced by the participating women as an educational environment where experiences and perceptions could be shared freely and in an atmosphere of trust.

Work-family Arrangements

In many societies, women work long hours both at home and work. Despite the challenges of managing both work and family, many women aim to advance to management positions in their careers. This means they are being asked to balance competing demands (Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014; Wayne et al., 2017). Although family responsibilities are now more commonly shared between parents, there is still a strong preference for the

woman to be the primary caregiver in the family (Heikkinen et al., 2014; Heikkinen and Lämsä, 2017; Pučetaitė et al., 2020).

Drawing on work-family conflict theory, it can be said that for women work and family roles can be incompatible (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Acting in one role is in conflict with and hinders success in another role. According to this Theory, the time and energy used at home mean that the woman does not have as much time and energy to invest in work and vice versa. Moreover, behavioural expectations at home and work differ. At home, the woman needs to be caring and nurturing, while in a management role these characteristics are not valued (Gherardi and Murgia, 2014). These conflicting demands tend to result in negative outcomes for women such as overload, stress, trade-offs and career exits, and the demands can have undesired impacts on the welfare of the women's families.

Previous studies have shown that when it comes to juggling work and family roles, work-family arrangements implemented by an employing organisation can support women to manage and balance any conflict (Heikkinen et al., 2021). Work-family arrangements at an organisational level mean that the organisation has in place various work-family initiatives that make it easier to combine work and family life (Butts et al., 2013). The initiatives may include flexible work hours, teleworking, leave policies, childcare services, the possibility of working part-time, arranging meetings at convenient times, and ensuring a smooth return to work from parental leave.

Some organisations have taken work-family support to a still more advanced level. They may provide a short period of paid parental leave for new grandparents or sleep-training courses for sleep-deprived families. To date, organisations in many societies have adopted work-family practices. However, the reality can also be that the women who are pursuing a managerial career may find that such initiatives are not particularly helpful. As shown by Heikkinen et al. (2021), one challenge is that despite the good intentions and the existence of an official human resources management strategy in an organisation, the initiatives may not be available or accessible in practice. Moreover, when the practices do not fit with women's needs, they are useless. They can even cause conflicts in the organisations regarding who has a right to use them (Perrigino et al., 2018).

In working life, women who pursue a managerial career need to confront competition, traditional gender norms, and pressure to act in a way regarded as appropriate for women when it comes to combining work and family (Heikkinen et al., 2014). Kossek et al. (2021) stated that to support women's careers, work-family arrangements offered by an organisation should be such that the organisational climate is characterised by high levels of support and low levels of a hindrance. In other words, the organisation should be family-friendly. In such environments all employees, not just women, can and are supported to use work-family arrangements to their advantage without fearing that

using the arrangements will have a negative effect on their career advancement (Lämsä et al., 2021).

Work and family arrangements in work-life are characterised by a complex interconnectedness between individuals and organisations, as well as the broader societal environment in which the organisations operate (Pučetaitė et al., 2020; Heikkinen et al., 2021). The traditional idea of gender roles, which stresses a clear and strict division between women's and men's work responsibilities and roles, needs to be made more flexible. As suggested by Kossek et al. (2021), it is important that the work-family arrangements offered by organisations be targeted at both women and men. In particular, an atmosphere that also encourages men to take up the arrangements is necessary. The role of managers as role models and instructors is crucial in this matter (Lämsä et al., 2021). Therefore, in line with a suggestion by Tanquerel and Grau-Grau (2019), one of the most effective ways to ease the work-family conflict for women who are pursuing managerial careers is to also involve fathers in using work-family arrangements to integrate work and family. However, it still seems to us that 'some' work is necessary to make this happen.

Conclusion

This chapter was designed, first, as a presentation of some of the main metaphors that describe women's career problems, especially in the field of management. The metaphors' power lies in their potential to convey complex and difficult phenomena in a concrete way (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), such as women's problems with regard to managerial careers. With the help of metaphors, the complex problems faced by women become more understandable and easier to discuss. Especially for those who are not as well aware of the challenges women face in pursuing managerial careers, the metaphors offer an easy way to make sense of the topic and become familiar with it in a vivid and lively way. Following the suggestion of Lakoff and Johnson, it is observed that the metaphors presented in this chapter engender interest in the topic and may trigger readers to tackle the problems and aim to solve them.

Two practices are also suggested that can be beneficial to supporting women's management careers. One of the practices, all-women management development programmes, highlighted an individual-level practice. As described here, this practice increases the various competencies of an individual woman. The competencies gained from the development programme are owned by the woman and are transferable, meaning a woman can build a sustainable career in a contemporary work environment in which career trajectories are increasingly dynamic, multiple, and changing (Akkermans et al., 2020).

Another practice, the implementation of work-family arrangements, focuses on the organisational level and pays attention to the culture and structure of workplaces.

Work-family arrangements can provide a decent work environment for women if the arrangements are organised and managed successfully and in an appropriate way (Heikkinen et al., 2021). Although the concentration of this research was on women, it should be noted that work-family arrangements implemented by workplaces can also benefit men (Pučėtaitė et al., 2020; Kangas and Lämsä, 2021). There is a risk that traditional gender roles become further embedded if men's role as carer and nurturer is not taken into consideration with regard to work-family arrangements.

Finally, it is also seen that the practices presented in this chapter are only two examples of the possible practices that have the potential to support the advancement of women in managerial careers. Other practices are also needed, for example, in organisational life, standardising recruitment and evaluation processes, building diversity strategies and programmes, forming bodies dealing with equality and equity, organising training in gender equality, and allowing gender quotas in management. All these and other relevant initiatives are important to study and develop. Moreover, it is also observed that the topics discussed in this chapter need more clarification in different societal and cultural contexts. This kind of contextual viewpoint can offer important and interesting insights because women's roles and their participation in work-life differ significantly across the globe (The Global Gender Gap Report, 2021). Thus, it can be concluded that even though women's progress into managerial roles has increased over time in many places, much still needs to be done now and in the future to overcome the barriers women experience in their careers.

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