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PRESENT POSITION OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN SOFTWARE INDUSTRY

Janga Babu Rao

Ph.D. Research Scholar, University of Hyderabad

INTRODUCTION:

While the questions of gender inequality continues to be an enigmatic puzzle waiting for solution even in 21st century, it remains to be an important area of exploration in the fields of social sciences in general and feminist studies in particular The present study attempts to address the issue as it encounters the modern technology which is believed to be gender neutral with an implicit emancipatory role to play in favour of women. The present study intends to address the issue from an emergent perspective of social exclusion which has its origin in Europe in 70s in the context of globalized world scenario. India being one of the traditional societies contributing significantly to world population is gradually transforming herself into a modern society in several spheres, or she is in a transitory stage, where the issue of gender becomes an important area to be explored. In this context, India has emerged as one of the destination of multi-national companies, for she provides best human resource having millions of technocrats, both men and women, who can provide service at cheaper rates. Indian women are no longer confined to homes or traditional agriculture related works and other traditional occupations, but with phenomenal increase of literacy rates over the years they have entered all fields such as education, medical and engineering and so on more or less in equal proportion with men. The achieved status along with the state's intervention measures of public policy alleviating the situation has changed scenario unlike the past. The work participation of women in non-agriculture has also increased considerably in the recent past.

Keywords: Emancipation, Transformation, Modern technology, Traditional occupations, Literacy rate.

POSITION OF INDIAN WOMEN IN A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Till the setting up of industrial establishments by the British companies in 1600 and later on other nationals, it is said that India flourished with rural cottage industries though agriculture being primary vocation for large number of families. The education was largely confined to certain privileged sections of the society and that too mostly to the men. Though it is believed that women have enjoyed better social status during the Vedic period, the post-Vedic period and medieval period witnessed lower status compared to men. Despite the fact that women participated in all cottage industries as well as agricultural activities they remained lower to men in social realm. They did not inherit the properties; remained under the control of men

before or even after the marriage. The process of urbanization followed by establishment of modern industries began with the colonial government. Schools were opened for lower castes and women as well. However, the peak stage was achieved only after the independence. Women's education in large scale started during the colonial period with active engagement of social reformers and Indian nationalists apart from the Christian missionaries.

Today, in the Indian workforce, fewer women are participating compared to one score ago according to the recent data from the Ministry of Labour and Employment. And, in the organized workforce, the proportion of women as a percentage of the total female population declined in the years of 2001 and 2011 after rising in the previous two decades. In the year of 2001, the work participation rate for women was 25.6 percent. This fell to 21.9 per cent in 2011-12, as per the 68th Round of the National Sample Survey. The worker participation rate for women had grown from 19.7 per cent in the year 1981 to 22.3 per cent in the year of 1991.

Later the decline in the participation rate from one-fourth of the female population to just a fifth in the 10 years to 2011 defines that working women continue to be the exception rather than the norm in India. In the urban areas the data however does reveal that a growing number of women are confident of receiving or taking up job, with the participation rate rising from 11.9 per cent in 2001 to 14.7 per cent in 2011. But the participation rate in rural area, which was as high as 30.8 per cent in 2001, fell to 24.8 per cent in the year of 2011.

WOMEN, INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGY:

Women make a huge and significant contribution throughout the globe to industrial output. Across all sectors, over 200 million women are engaged and half of this number is from the developing countries. Their work not only sustains their families, but also makes a significant contribution to socio-economic progress of the country.. As well, most women are employed in low- skilled and poorly paid positions, where they are often ex-posed to health hazards. When we observe on the other hand seriously some are highly qualified women who are into higher/senior decision-making positions. The creativity and talent of all women are an invaluable resource, that can and should be developed both for them own self- realization and for the benefit of society as a whole.

The world economy is undergoing a period of rapid change with important impacts on women. Globalization and increasing competition are favoring technology –intensive production and skilled labor. Automation and advances in the field of information and technology are reducing the importance of the low skill, labor-intensive occupations in sectors such as agriculture and textiles that have traditionally been seen as women's work. When we observe in the position of women in industries are already disdained and disadvantaged in many like developed and developing countries. Despite women comprise 30 per cent in the industrial labor force globally, they tend to be focused and concentrated in low –level jobs, where they are worst paid, lacked social services, face exposure to health hazards. If their skills and talent are not exalted and mountained to enable their complete

participation in the technology based industries of the future , women are likely to face further disadvantages in finding and keeping jobs in the coming future. And, where retraining programmes do exist, they are too often focused on men. On the other hand, when women are given importance in training technology and credit, they may surely play full role in the field of social development and in economic.

The economy in the world is undergoing a period of rapid change with significant impacts on women. Globalization and increasing competition are favoring technology –intensive production and skilled labor. Women are give great and dynamic opportunities in the field of industrial and production for changes for poverty alleviation, self-sufficiency through income generation and productive businesses that create local employment. For women, the issue of technology is not simply about grading skills, but acquiring new and more appropriate technologies. For ensample, the majority of women that live in rural areas use rudimentary amd time- consuming technologies in their informal activities, that are typically in the field of agrarian sector. Technologies that are existing also contribute to unsafe working environmental degradation, where women are often especially at risk and in danger (UNDO). Introducing new and appropriate technologies cannot only simplify reduce drudgery, work and assist improve working conditions and the environment, but also create and improve income generating activities for women.

subsector, where there is a significant number of women entrepreneurs. And, in the field of industry, however, women have low skills, and the entrepreneurs do not have sufficient skills in the design of production and marketing field at present. (Ref: The Managing Director Industrial Sectors and Environment Division United Nations Industrial Development Organization P.O. Box 300 A-1400 Vienna, Austria).

SERVICE SECTOR:

Women are under represented in India's manufacturing sector with participation ranging from only three to twelve per cent a study by Consulate General of Sweden in India opens. The baseline study on women observed that based on interviews in companies across sectors, identified that Indian women were better represented in the service sector, with participation ranging from 27 to 40 per cent.

"It has been observed that women were unaware of the job opportunities in the field of manufacturing sector, and we need to bridge the gap. Through Kraftsmela (a programme of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce India) defining that they would like to desire to skill underprivileged women from all walks of life and try to provide them with employment in manufacturing sector," said Ulrika Sundberg, Counsel general, Sweden. (Ref: Hindustan Times, Monday, April 29, 2019)

Ulrika went on to add that under and in the field of manufacturing sector some of the products and industries that were included were drilling machines, water filters and manufacturing tools. As well, where as in service sector, it was digital solutions, digital services in logistics, managing of funds and communications, or jobs which required soft

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skills. And, in the same manner, Sunberg added that there great gap between women that pursuing education and opting for a job. Figures of those pursuing higher education rose from 39 per cent in the year of 2007 to 46 per cent in 2014, however, not all women opted to work due to various reasons. Later, in the field of manufacturing, participation rate of women went up to 12 per cent in emerging sectors such as computer engineering, but fell to 3 per cent in core engineering sector.

According to the study of them, a lack of women in senior positions, with just over half of the companies having female leaders at the vice-president level. The study stated an overall lack of female role models. Sara Larasson, general manager of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, who was also a part of the study, saying and said women were difficult to retain, that is why few of them made it to senior level.

According to the Indian context, that has been observed in India a woman may take a maternity leave and not come back. To ensure that women are retained, the concept of parental leave should be brought into place, to ease the burden off women's shoulder , and the responsibility could be equality divided between both the parents said Larsson. Ami Mehta, HR personnel was of the opinion in the context of her that there has been stabilization in women workforce in service sector. There is still difference in pay scale when it comes to men and women, but now there are more women who are willing to work, a lot of them don't' really mind working odd shifts as well because they desire to grow on par with men.

Historically women may have taken up work for various reasons. But once they become employees, they have a specific role to play in the organization. Their understanding of this role would guide their reactions and their attempts to sole some of the problems that generally management faces. It can be observed that women come to organizations with certain preconceived nations that would prove counterproductive. These perceptions tem from the accepted role priorities. For example, men had always been the brad winners; hence women would not take this as their primary responsibility and adapt a more causal approach. For women in India, such emphasis has significance. Traditionally Indian ethos has been propagating role taking approach with respect to one's life roles.

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Total and women employment in organized sector in India (figures in thousand)

Year	Public Sector			Private Sector			Total		
	Women	Total	% of women	Women	Total	% of women	Women	Total	% of women
1992	2467.0	19209.6	12.8	1522.7	7846.1	19.4	3889..8	27055.7	14.4
1993	2476.7	19326.1	12.8	1549.7	7850.5	19.7	4026.3	27176.6	14.8
1994	2564.6	19444.9	13.2	1589.3	7929.9	20.0	4153.9	27374.8	15.2
1995	2600.4	19466.3	13.4	1627.5	8058.5	20.2	4227.9	27524.7	15.4
1996	2634.5	19429.3	13.6	1791.9	8511.6	21.1	4426.4	27940.9	15.8
1997	2727.6	19559.1	14.0	1909.4	8685.5	22.0	4637.0	28244.5	16.4
1998	2762.7	19417.8	14.2	2010.9	8747.9	23.0	4773.6	28165.8	17.0
1999	2810.7	19414.8	14.5	2018.4	8698.2	23.2	4829.2	28113.1	17.2
2000	2857.0	19313.7	14.8	2065.8	8646.0	23.9	4922.8	27959.7	17.6

Source : Quarterly Employment Review, Directorate General of Employment & Training, Ministry of Labour

"We give them extended leave till about 2 years .they can start a family and rejoin at the same post. They are very good resources and it is worth the efforts."

- S. Padmanabham, Global HR head, TCS

l and women employment in organized sector in India (figures in thousand)

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING:

Software engineering is the application of engineering s to the development of software in a systematic manner. It is significant because it enables building and developing complex systems in a timely manner with high quality. It influences nearly every aspect of our lives and has become pervasive in our culture commerce and of every activity. Four to five decades ago no one could have predicted that software would become an indispensable technology for future.

At present, software takes a dual and significant role in the globe. It is a product and at the same time a vehicle for a delivering product. As a product, it delivers the computing potential that embodied by computer hardware or more broadly, by a network of computers that are accessible by local hardware. Software is an information transformer-producing, acquiring, displaying, managing modifying or transmitting information that can be as simple as a single

bit or as complex as multimedia presentation derived from data acquired from dozens of independent sources.

All men and women utilize Software by using soft skills in a quick and transparent manner in the modern era, in all manners instead of physical labour. So, most of men and women desire to have such sort of jobs and are interested to enter into the companies of software field.

So that, most of women have desired for many years and are interested to do their jobs skillfully with the support of senior staff and their parents that are in their bosom. A great variety of software companies have emerged in the software industry. Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft was the richest person in the world in (2009) largely due to his ownership of a significant number of shares in Microsoft, the company responsible for Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office software products - both market leaders in their respective product categories. Today, a huge software industry has become a dominant factor in the economics of the computerized globe/world.

The software industry expanded in the early 1960s, almost immediately after computers were first sold in mass –produced quantities. Business officials, government sector and universities created a demand for software. Many of these programs are written with the full –time staff programmers in writing.

While the software industry has expanded throughout the globe, the urban and English educated have found an edge over others. Many lower middle class families coming from small towns did find their lives significantly got impacted by the employment in the Software sector. The presence of world's major Software companies like Microsoft, Infosys, Google, Wipro, Face book, IBM etc., across the developing countries provided employment opportunities to computer professionals and others.

According to the Socio Economic Outlook 2016, Government of Telangana, "ICT industry in the state consists of Business Processing Organizations and Knowledge Processing Organizations, providing professional services across the globe. Hyderabad is already a magnet which attracts the best in the world. The new ICT policy intends to embellish it even further to make it stand out as the most preferred destination for the IT companies. Some companies are found to be more female-friendly than others. IBM recently conducted training programme for Technical Women in the year of 2011. This award reflects representation, retention, and advancement; but most of the women have been harassed and trampled for many years in all manners under the soles of male employees and male-dominated companies. There is a lot of disparity, discrimination and difference towards women employees. As well, women's influence in the early years of the software industry, software engineering remains a male-dominated field.

A study out of the University of Texas showed that women ask for $7,000 less than their male counterparts in job interviews. But when they were asked to negotiate on behalf of a friend or colleague, they asked for as much as men.

Asia has been generating a lot of commercial interest lately. Both domestic and multinational companies are competing to capture the huge markets for transborder satellite television, computers and telecommunication systems. In the field of development, communication technology have always kindled hopes for speedy progress.

In India, the mass media such print, radio and television have a very wide reach, whilst more recent technologies such as PCs, the Internet and cell phones are only available in the cities; as well the status of women in India is improving, but these improvements are limited to the middle class urban society and progress for lower strata is very slow.

Despite the increase in women's participation in many economic activities, there has been no integration of the women's needs problem agenda in the decision making process. Most women work in the informal sector (unorganized). Women only enjoyed limited results from development because the quality of their human resources is still low. This is because women's opportunities for education and training are still limited compared to their male colleagues. Working women, in the government or the private sector, are often passed by for training opportunities. This is generally because the is not aware of women's concerns, and conclude that naturally women are less interested in-self improvement, or not willing to give up their household duties.

CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion it is clear that the growth of software industry in the developed countries particularly in the USA has a far fetching impact on the skilled labour on the developing countries like India, and the countries economy as well. In this regard what is significant to note is the increased number of women employees in the industry and the women's encounter of prescribed and achieved status. As discussed earlier, it is important to ask whether the large scale employment of women in software industry has any impact on their prescribed low social status? Has the achieved status any alleviating or ameliorating influence the prescribed status. In other words have women been able to improve their social status as software engineers, as they have in fact have entered into the field of science and technology which were the bastions of men so far. Also, it is important to know who the women software engineers are treated in this male dominated domain and, how women software engineers are able to stand in the occupational competitions and achieve higher positions in the companies? It is also interesting to find out if the software companies are able to maintain gender neutrality in terms of working conditions, or is there any male bias? Finally to what extent the software engineering has helped improve the social status of women?

Keeping the above in my mind the present study makes an attempt to study the Present position of women in software industry.

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