

A Conceptual Frame Work On Career Phases Of Women In Management

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Abstract: *The number of talented and ambitious women entering in to management career is more in recent years. Many organizations have shown readiness to promote women in senior management level. But still there is not much increase in number of women in senior management .Their promotion and progression in their career reducing due to various cultural and structural barriers such as gender stereotyping, society's expectations of women, and childcare arrangements. Most of the women entering in management with out a career plan, not aware about their career phases and challenges encounter in each phase .They stuck in middle management level. If so, what are the career phases of women in management? What are the difficulties they encounter in each phase of their career? This article tries to answer these questions. This article mentions three career path based on Ines Wichert's book called "where have all Senior Women Gone" (2011). This article gives insight in to career phases of women in management.*

Keywords: *Career, Career Phases, Women in Management.*

I. INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of women try to progress in work participation and in education levels similar to those of men across the developed world. For today's women career become more important. Delaying marriages, child birth, returning to work after maternity leave and consciously choosing the life partner for matching their career, are signs that women are serious about their career. When a woman reaches her late twenties or her thirties, she has to make some difficult decisions about whether to focus on her career or to start a family. Mason and Mason Ekman point out that a woman's thirties are often her toughest time, and if she chooses to have a family her career prospects start to change dramatically. At work women need more flexibility and after having children the image she is having in the mind of superiors and subordinates from potential track to 'mommy track'. Having a young family she has to face many challenges like burn outs, having guilt feelings not doing justice with family as well as her organizational roles and blocked promotions are not uncommon incidents in women managers'

career. It is very interesting to know that different career phase's women pass through to reach to the top level. Various researches had done on successful women and tried to chart women's career path. This article mentions three career path mentioned by Ines Wichert in her book called "where have all Senior Women Gone" (2011).

The career phases of women in management divided in to three broad phases namely High Flyers, Jugglers and Authentic Contribution.

II. FIRST CAREER PHASE-HIGH FLYERS

This phase was described from a woman's mid twenties to her early thirties. In this phase is characterized by women being proactive in progressing their career. She feels very ambitious and ready to take all stretch assignments. Women are willing to spend long hours in the office and learning to make good networks in this phase. A general perception is that in this phase younger women is taking up more general management and strategic roles than their male counterpart.

Here given three explanations about quick progress of women in this phase. First, younger women have finished their education and have been raised with the expectation of equal developmental opportunities and equal challenges in their early life. They consider themselves as responsible for their own destinies and take advantage of career opportunities as they emerge. The Second explanation based on their age. Women only start to be perceived as female after they start their family. Till that they try to be put on equal footing with male counterparts. They may be seen as high energetic in their first career phase. Therefore they can hold back all the restrictions as women and pass through the glass ceiling. But still it's difficult for women to reach the top due to the stereotype thinking of old senior men in the upper end.

In this phase women have to learn a lot from the setbacks happened related with their roles. Those women who have not learned from setbacks in the first phase and try to move upward will face lots of blocks and face obstacles later. They do not have career progress. During this first phase women need to handle lots of difficult projects and learned lots of skill. This is the time to build networks. They should identify a mentor and have to take proper coaching. Mentoring and coaching gives confidence which is needed for further development. Many of the women in this face are increasingly thinking about combine their career ambitions with their desire to start a family.

III. SECOND PHASE-JUGGLERS

In this phase women are in their early thirties to mid forties. In this phase most of the women involving in child rearing and decide whether to have second child or not. This is the most difficult phase for women because of many choices women have to make during this time with regarding to starting a family and fully commitment to work. Managing career and motherhood is a central theme at this time.

This phase is very important for women in career. Usually in thirties women are laying foundation for the move to the top. After acquiring some experience in job during her twenties, in thirties she has to concentrate on more high responsible jobs and projects, For that she has to travel and spend long hours in the office for showing full commitment to the organization. At the same time they are busy with handling their young children and starting of their school years. So need more flexibility and need to observe how others manage work life balance issues.

The women who make it possible are flourishing in their career. But number of studies has shown that executive mothers feel that restricting themselves from taking high responsibilities and step back in their career. Many of them are preferring career break in this time because of the demanding work and family. After this break the reentry to the prestigious position is very difficult and women lose their high potential attributes in the eyes of those around them. Some women never drop out completely but tend to get stuck at the bottom of the management hierarchy.

Irrespective of how they have chosen their family life and career, for many women in this second phase is an ideal time to plan their career and done what is necessary. They should

be focused. In this phase they need intensive outsourcing to make it happen, which involves form parenting responsibilities to managerial. They can avail support from partners, parents, nannies, babysitters, cooks, household helpers at home. At work they can get support from informal networks, supportive colleagues, mentors and superiors. During this time women's career is strongly influenced by the relationships around them both at work and family. For a family woman this career phase is really a challenging one. They should mentally prepare to hit much crisis point.

IV. THIRD CAREER PHASE –AUTHENTIC CONTRIBUTORS

In third career phase of women includes from about 45 to around 60. In this phase women career is a planned one. They get lot of experiences from the challenges they had faced in early thirties and early forties. They become much planned not because of that their family responsibilities come down because of increasing their confidence for handling both family and career demands. This phase gives stability on women's career and continues to take challenging responsibilities in the organization. Women focus their career with new energy. The new focus is shifting from personal achievement to contributing to organization. More than personal satisfaction the women act like a mentor and coach to others in the organization.

V. CONCLUSION

Most of the women in management are unaware about their career path. For a successful career they must know where they are standing and what type of problems they have to encounter in current phase. Those who are aware about this can plan for facing the challenges and climb the ladders in career with out much hindrance.

Jennifer Sheridan, founder and chief executive of Togeve Ltd, said: "A mentor is more valuable than anything else. It's more valuable than money. A mentor saves you a lot of time and stress as they give you their advice. It's important to have at least one female mentor if you can find one."

The companies must understand the working styles and career path of women then can be come up with better training programmes which will make them confident to face the situations.

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