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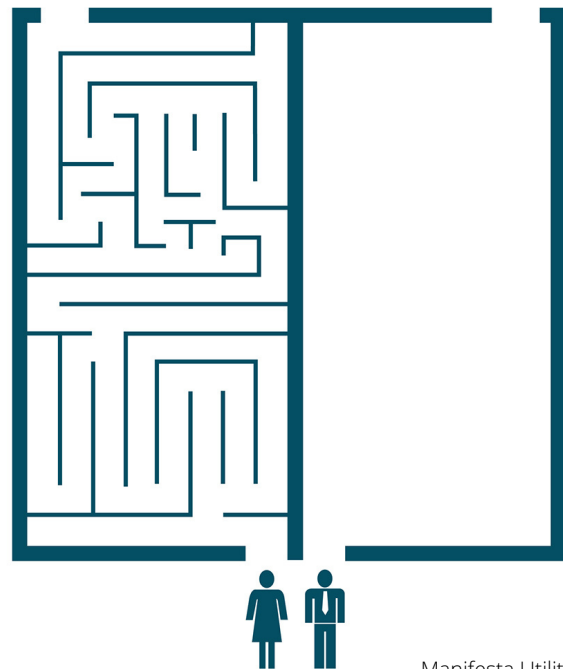
WOMEN NAVIGATORS AND THE WORK-MAZE

Committee for Managing Gender Issues



THE CORPORATE CLAWS

Anuracti Sharma, Academic Associate, Communication Area



Manifesta Utilita

She has a mind of her own, they say
Watch her stride, she's got some guile
As if she walked into the room even before she
stepped inside

She obviously knows the clients from a night at the
hotel room before

The redness of her lips, the blush on her cheeks,
It's a sign, she has bid on herself this time

How else does one deceit the vanity on her face
Like a lioness roaring from a cage

Slid in a short dress,
sewed in provocative intellect
stitched out of appalling poise

She stepped out of the boarding room
In a pair of stilettos walking over cold corporate,
condescending noise

Whoever said the glass ceiling was made to be
shattered
Never heard of crushing it tiny enough
to mix it in cups of Starbucks & lemon tea connoisseurs

So, watch out for her
She probably bites on yours,
your wife's and your WiFi's inconsistencies alive
And preys upon the company's
Weary, wasted, wretched employees

Bitch or the boss, she's all the same,
They'd all say dismissively
As if seducing success was an act of the feminine
She'd laugh aggressively

When work gets judged for being completed by
'him' or 'her'
Is the day she breaks the barriers of what's right
and what's hers

And as the world outside reads her name for the
company she owns
It's a war she wins each day at
the front desk, in the conference room, on
elaborate annual reports

She – a receptionist, a manager, a CEO
Varied designations, the very same echo in her
roar
But let's just talk about why she chose to color
her hair blonde,
amidst other havocs

**THIS MONTH'S
FEATURED
SUBMISSIONS**

Utilita Manifesta

A NEW DAWN?

Ananya Pimpley, Research Assistant, Gender Centre

We live in a country of dreams
 We strive to establish our roots in halls of
 brilliance and innovation
 Where the struggle for power
 and the yearning for excellence
 Never dies down
 But what about the lost hope and the grieving
 cries of the girls whose souls were moldered
 apart
 Their ambitions beaten black and blue
 Their pure intentions, abused
 Can they ever wake up to a new dawn?
 Can they ever see the true light?

We build blocks, we build bridges, everyday
 in our lives
 That guide us towards the meccas of
 knowledge and the foothills of those who are
 wise
 Countless lives work day and night
 To earn their living, their power and their
 might

Amidst this are the blocks we build for
 those
 Who aren't allowed to be 'exposed'
 Curbing their freedom, crushing their
 morale
 Belittling their intelligence for the sake of
 upholding others' pride
 Is this a punishment of which they have
 earned no right?

Can they ever see a new dawn?
 Can they ever wake up to a new morning?
 Or will they always be shone a moonless
 night

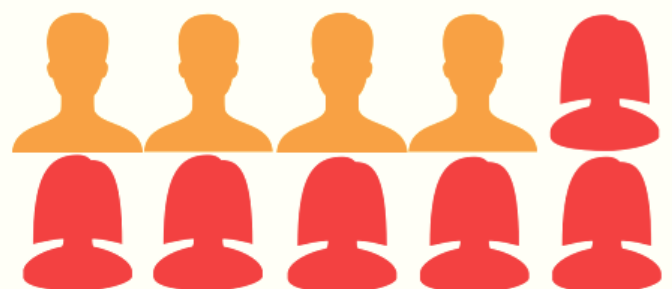
Is this truly a new era of academia?
 Is this truly our new dawn?

Women in academia: Glass ceilings and sticky floors?

Top: Professor or equivalent



Bottom: Tutors or Demonstrators



Source: University Grants Commission, Annual Report 2016-17

BE THE GIRL ON THE SHOP-FLOOR!

Gauri Ranjekar. PGPX Student

At workplaces, having grease or oil stains on clothes or getting nicely polished nails cut while pulling off safety gloves or wearing heavy safety shoes with metal toes are few of the experiences of the girls who work in a shop-floor environment. And I am sure those of you who have experienced this must be smirking right now. There is a story of a girl that I read sometime back.

In 1974, a girl student of IISC Bangalore got upset when she saw a job post in her college campus which said, "we need bright engineers, but Lady candidates need not apply". She wrote directly to the company head about how she found the job description discriminating. Few days later she got an interview call from that manufacturing company in Pune. During the interview, the panel asked her all technical questions which she answered flawlessly. After the interview, an elderly gentleman with an affectionate voice told her, "Do you know why we said lady candidates need not apply? The reason is that we have never employed any woman on the shop floor before. This is not a co-ed college; this is a factory. Girls like you should work in research laboratories." "*But you must start somewhere, otherwise no woman will ever be able to work in your factories*", replied the young girl. Finally, after a lot of deliberation, the girl got shortlisted. She was one of the first girls who started working on the shop-floor. This girl I am referring to is Sudha Murthy, the company she was placed was TELCO, today's TATA Motors, and the person she wrote to was none other than JRD Tata.

This story, which is from Sudha Murthy's article "Appro-JRD." never fails to inspire me. That was a change which Sudha Murthy could dare to bring. And that was the change JRD encouraged. It was 1974, more than 40 years back. But even today in India, there are many biases towards women working in the male dominated industry, manufacturing is just one of such industries. Bringing about difference, creating change, and standing up for something which is right becomes essential when it comes to breaking stereotypes against gender.

After engineering, I had 2 placement offers, one was an office setup- corporate role and another one was with a tractor manufacturing company. I chose the latter one, and my first role was a shop-floor quality supervisor and I got to know that I am the only woman who would be working on the shop-floor. I clearly remember my first day, when the factory head told me to wear factory apron and work on the assembly line for few days and build tractors. It was a big move. The shop-floor operators had never talked to a woman supervisor or co-worker before and suddenly I was working with them, learning, and discussing and doing the assembly. I built Tractor transmissions for 15 days straight. This step was a breakthrough. I could not only learn about the product in and out, but I could develop a bond with the workforce which helped me enter a world which was traditionally male dominated, and I got blended in nicely. Later, these industrial relations turned out to be very helpful to me.

When I took up this role, the company was struggling to find and retain women in operations, and during that time my entry and sustenance in that role was very critical. Since then, various changes have taken place in my company to make it more gender neutral. Understanding the importance of diversity and making the working culture more inclusive has been the chief motive of the management. We started from scratch, as basic as building women toilets on the shop-floor. Starting from there to creating creche, developing adequate transportation facility, ensuring safety and security, to creating a platform- a women affiliate group, for women to come together to build a support system- overall organization evolved and transformed to a more matured inclusive workspace. In 2007, I was the only girl on the shop-floor, but today I can proudly say that there are around 100 girls working there.



Anonymous submitter



Aakruti Jain. PGP1 Student

This overall journey gave me various insights. And if we really want to endorse diversity at workplace then we all have a role to play. For an organization, promoting diversity should not be a one step activity. It has to be a well-defined strategy, starting with a very basic step- believing in gender neutrality and creating equal opportunity for both women and men.

My organization believed in me, and I did get an opportunity to perform and succeed and my story became the pioneer one in fostering diversity and inclusion. Along with creating opportunities, understanding cultural nuances, focusing on basic facilities and infrastructure, and taking into consideration the gender differences and key issues faced by working mothers etc. are few key variables which need to be worked upon while developing the strategy. I call it- creating “workplace for everyone”. Secondly, I think we, as a society, need to have a paradigm shift in our outlook. There are certain stereotypes we all carry and at times it becomes difficult to get rid of them, for example, in my case, I was discouraged by many who claimed that manufacturing-shop-floor jobs are very unsophisticated and involve laborious tasks and showed sympathy that I need to work in a place which according to them was ‘definitely’ not suitable for women. Such judgements are not only wrong but keep many eligible women away from various potential work opportunities and at times undermine the skills and capabilities of those who traditionally are not supposed to do certain tasks.

Next, what I have observed is that women rate themselves lower than men in terms of certain skills which are in fact are gender neutral. These perceptions perhaps have been developed over years since generations. We women should neither feel inferior to our men counterparts, nor should we feel disadvantaged of being a woman. Since the last couple of years, I have been mentoring women and encouraging them to come out of their shell of conventions and explore a bigger world which is full of opportunities. One ideology I have been strictly following for years and usually pass it on to fellow women is to never say ‘No’ to a particular task or never underestimate our capabilities to deal with problems just because we are women.

Organizations, firms, individuals and even Governments have a role to play in the intended transformation. For Government, creating policies to promote more women workforce in areas which are still untapped and creating required infrastructure towards safety, comfort and health would be few critical parameters. We need to be the CHANGE to bring out the change. I wish to see a day, when there will not be special seminars to encourage women to take up engineering, a day when no campaigns, no women empowerment forums will be held. A day when there will be no special category for women in any field. That day I will say that there is no more Gender bias in this world. The society then will be more inclusive and matured.