

Pride and Prejudice –Women in Leadership Roles!

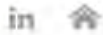
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There is a lot of discussion on the subject of women in leadership roles- and it all boils down to the pride and the prejudice.

I have worked with women leadership many a times in the 5 multinationals I have worked with in my corporate life. Women do bring in different perspectives and managing styles. I believe that when we look at women for leadership roles -giving diversity as a reason is pretty demeaning -women like men can qualify for the role on the same terms.

The diversity agenda is alright at junior or middle management -and we need to do that given the paucity of women in the workforce! Women need to be financially empowered so as to be treated on par with men in society. In fact, much of today's ill-treatment of women in the society is because of inequality. We cannot wish it away till we do something about it.

However, at senior leadership positions, you have to deliver and be effective -why would any organization compromise on that? So what would women bring to the table that men may not?

Here are 5 strong areas that women score over men.

Sense of Empathy

Women by nature are more sensitive than men. Women relate to people's needs much more than most men. Women will weigh the pros and the cons, as to what will make a difference in people's lives and to their families. It is therefore not surprising when Indra Nooyi wrote to the parents of the people who worked in Pepsi. This gave each and every person more sense of value in the office as well as at home. I wonder if any man would ever think of doing that.

Sense of Responsibility and a Greater Ability to Multi-Task

Women give a full 100% when they are committed. Women are also perhaps more humble than men while multi-tasking all the time. Women have to manage the home as well as work all across the world. They, therefore, are more organized. There is a strong aspect of empathy while driving hard decisions - especially when it is required to be tougher -they make it much more acceptable and fruitful, therefore help create long-term sustainable organisations. Women could therefore also be a wonderful coach to seniors as well as to the juniors.

Diversity of Thinking -Known to Stretch a Rupee Longer, Usually can Live More Frugally

Women understand better than men how to get more value for money. No wonder when Alyque Padamsee made the Surf campaign- it was Lalitaji as the main protagonist and not Lalitji! Have we not seen our mothers eat last and sacrifice the goodies for the family. Men are more materialistic -women would also look at people and society. These are enduring values which is in their DNA and they carry that wherever they go!

Instinctive Savers

Women know the value of savings -they know better than men that money does not grow on trees and it takes time to build a corpus! They do not live in a make-believe world as many men do. They are therefore more grounded and are able to integrate easily into the fabric of the organisation. The same goes with the discretionary money they have at their disposal. Women usually cut down on flamboyant expenditures. Women by nature have developed a high sense of savings for the rainy days! They have the foresight to see what we would need in the long run. So the future is not sacrificed at the altar of what is needed immediately. I would go to the extent to say that another word for pragmatism is women!

Highly Developed Sense of Fairness, Leading to Equitable Allocation of Scarce Resources

This is debatable like everything else but I believe women are fairer than men when it comes to equitable allocation of resources! Do we not see that in our daily lives! Women treat the kids alike -whether they are boys or girls! Men, on the other hand, will be softer on the girls all their life than they are with the boys! We would have also seen that women do distribute the scarce resources more equitably.

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Last but not the least, I also believe that women should not mimic men in their behaviour and must play to their innate strengths!

Having said that, men also do bring different strengths to the table in the corporate world but that is a story we will discuss another day!