Chapter 15
Women in Leadership:
Why We Need More Women Leaders

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ABSTRACT

Women in leadership constitutes a major problem which barely receives attention in today’s male-dominated world. Problems of war, starvation, and injustice in today’s world can be blamed on the absence of women in leadership positions. This situation demands immediate attention because the world needs both feminine and masculine traits to solve global problems. Women are half the talent of the human race. The world needs them for economic and social success. Women bring a perspective that values not only competition but also collaboration in organizations and teams. Their feminine values are a functional system of contemporary, communal and open economy. Ultimately women’s leadership will improve not only business, the family and society, but the world which will become more sustainable and peaceful as a result. We dare not exclude any group of people based on gender, colour or race from the opportunity to lead others to a better future.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the ability to take an average team of individuals and transform them into superstars. The best leader is the one who inspires his workers to achieve greatness each and every day. – Jonas Falk, CEO, Organic Life (Helmrich, 2015)

We need to invest more in girls’ education and bring more women into the formal employment industry to successfully fight global poverty and to lessen civil conflict because today’s global problems entail that leaders with diverse skill sets are available to tackle pressing universal issues, not just for the sake of basic fairness but because it is very important. Leadership of women in media, institutions, businesses, politics, corporations, and government, with a full and equal voice, can be instrumental in global peacemaking.

Contemporary ideas of transformative leadership and what it takes are more in tune with attributes and the characteristics women usually share like inclusiveness, empathy, compassion and responsiveness, and a more open and inclusive negotiation style. However, this is not necessarily true of all women.

In so called developing nations, women comprehend and experience issues differently than men, so having women at the table influences how policy resources are spent through gender budgeting efforts. UNSCR 1325 was a landmark resolution with the objective to promote women’s participation in decision-making; because having women at the table impacts how decisions are made and ultimately how resources are spent as well (Shepherd, 2013).

In the so called developed countries, just as in other countries, increasing female participation in the workforce and including in leadership positions has proven to be quite beneficial. A recent Goldman Sachs report (2013) argued that if female workforce participation rose to match that as men, Japan could boost its absolute GDP by 12.5%. In Canada, a research on the impact of women in public service revealed that women have had a strong impact on “policy, programs and operations such as in fisheries, the automotive industry, national security, natural resources, the environment, science, human resources and international relations.” This influence came from obvious improvements for women in leadership roles in the labor force, leadership styles that are open, cooperative and from the inclusion of women’s perspectives.

According to the World Economic Forum, it could take additional 118 years to close the income gap as women are filling up leadership positions in the private and public sectors based on present-day trends. World Economic Forum observes that about half of the countries in the world have had a female head of state or government at one time or another (Hausmann, 2009). The world is making positive development because women are beginning to break through in politics and growth, and although we’re still well short of our goals regarding gender parity.

An edition of Forbes magazine featured the top three of the Forbes 100 most powerful women list in politics: Angela Merkel, Hillary Clinton and Janet Yellen (MacDonald and Schoenberger, 2005). Some countries, like Germany, Taiwan, Venezuela, South Korea, Liberia, have had first female leaders while Britain is on its second female leader. The United States of America is yet to have an elected female president. Hillary Clinton, a former U.S. senator and secretary of state, on 27th July, 2016, became the Democratic Party’s nominee for U.S. President. She would be the first woman in U.S. history to lead the ticket of a major political party.

Female leaders change the way global solutions are forged because they bring the skills, different perspectives and structural and cultural difference to drive effective solutions. There is no doubt that today’s global problems need leaders that have diverse skill sets and innovation that can only arise from diverse ideas and actors.

Having more female leaders in politics and the boardroom is vital because it changes the standards about who can lead and what qualities are needed in leadership. When women are in leadership roles, it breaks down cultural and structural barriers and improves leadership thus showcasing the capability of women.

Differences between men and women continue in the form of pay gaps, irregular opportunities for progression, and unstable representation in key decision-making across geographies and income levels.

It’s no secret that women have generally been confronted with more obstacles than men when it comes to the total participation in their nation’s economy. We are mindful of the fact that very few women are at the helm of blue-chip companies in spite of the fact that the value of gender diversity, especially in
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