



CAREER GROWTH OF WOMEN IN PROFESSIONAL FIELD

¹Lakshmidevi. R, ²Dr. A. Geetha

¹Research Scholar, ²Head and Associate Professor

¹Department of Business Administration, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research, Chennai,

¹Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research, Chennai, India

Abstract : The career development of women employees is a crucial aspect of workforce diversity and organizational success. Despite significant strides towards gender equality in the workplace, women still face numerous challenges in advancing their careers. Research indicates that various factors such as gender bias, limited access to mentorship and sponsorship opportunities, work-life balance issues, and systemic barriers contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. To address these challenges, organizations must implement comprehensive strategies that promote gender equality and support the career advancement of women employees. This includes fostering inclusive work cultures that value diversity, providing targeted training and development programs, offering flexible work arrangements, and actively addressing unconscious biases in recruitment, promotion, and performance evaluation processes. Moreover, organizations can benefit from establishing formal mentorship and sponsorship programs to provide women employees with guidance, support, and access to networks that can facilitate their professional growth. By prioritizing the career development of women employees, organizations not only enhance their diversity and inclusion initiatives but also unlock the full potential of their talent pool, driving innovation, creativity, and sustainable business performance in the long run.

Keywords: *Professional development, Mentorship, Leadership opportunities, Work-life balance*

INTRODUCTION

Women's career development is an essential facet of organizational success and societal progress. Over the past decades, there has been a notable shift towards recognizing and fostering the professional growth of women in the workplace. However, despite strides towards gender equality, women still face unique challenges and barriers in their career advancement journey. It is crucial to delve into the intricacies of women's career development to understand these challenges and to formulate effective strategies for empowerment and support.

Historically, women have encountered systemic biases and discriminatory practices that hinder their professional growth. These biases manifest in various forms, including unequal pay, limited access to leadership roles, and stereotypical perceptions of women's capabilities. Additionally, women often confront societal expectations related to caregiving responsibilities, which can impede their career progression. Balancing work and family commitments remains a significant challenge for many women, leading to career interruptions and stalled advancement. Despite these challenges, women bring unique perspectives, skills, and talents to the workforce, enriching organizational cultures and driving innovation. Recognizing the importance of gender diversity, many companies have initiated programs and policies aimed at promoting women's career development. These initiatives encompass mentorship programs, leadership training, flexible work arrangements, and diversity initiatives designed to foster an inclusive workplace culture.

Moreover, cultivating a supportive and inclusive work environment is imperative for women's career advancement. Organizations must address unconscious biases, promote equal opportunities for growth and advancement, and provide resources and support systems tailored to women's needs. Additionally, fostering a culture of mentorship and sponsorship can facilitate networking opportunities and provide guidance for women navigating their career paths. Furthermore, leveraging technology and digital platforms can enhance access to career development resources for women, particularly those in remote or underserved communities. Online mentoring programs, educational webinars, and networking forums offer avenues for women to connect, learn, and grow professionally.

In today's dynamic workforce landscape, fostering the career development of women employees is not just a matter of equality and social justice; it's a strategic imperative for organizations aiming to thrive in an increasingly competitive global market. This abstract sheds light on the importance of investing in women's career development initiatives and outlines key strategies to effectively support their professional growth. Research consistently demonstrates that diverse teams, including gender diversity, drive innovation, creativity, and overall performance. However, despite advancements in gender equality, women still face numerous barriers in the workplace that hinder their career progression. Factors such as unconscious bias, lack of mentorship opportunities, limited access to leadership roles, and work-life balance challenges continue to impede women's advancement within organizations. To address these challenges, organizations must implement comprehensive strategies aimed at empowering women

throughout their career journeys. This involves creating inclusive work environments where women feel valued, respected, and supported. Mentorship and sponsorship programs play a crucial role in providing women with guidance, networking opportunities, and access to senior leadership. Additionally, offering targeted training and development programs tailored to women's needs can equip them with the skills and confidence necessary to advance in their careers. Flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and parental leave policies, are instrumental in enabling women to balance their professional and personal responsibilities effectively. By accommodating diverse needs and lifestyles, organizations can attract and retain top female talent, contributing to a more robust and resilient workforce.

Objectives

1. To study the demographic variable of the respondents
2. To analyse the career path of women in professional field

Review of literature

Davey (2000) While there aren't many studies on women's career decisions, those that have been done in various nations have had the opportunity to investigate and delve into the elements that have shaped women's choices in the banking sector. A person's job choice involves selecting a vocation that aligns with their environment, skills, talents, and qualifications. When attempting to comprehend the aspects that influence women's choice of work, two themes come to light: First, the connection between women and their profession.

Vanguard Newspaper (2018, March). The reports that the percentage of women working in the banking industry rose from twenty four percent and twenty eight percent in 2012 to 2017. The Bankers' Committee in Nigeria took action to adopt the quota system and raise the percentage of women in managerial positions to thirty percent in order to reduce obstacles pertaining to women's career advancement. The number of women in upper managerial positions increased significantly as a result of this quota. The CBN's institutionalized policies and programs were created to guarantee gender equality and remove obstacles that would limit women's opportunities to advance in their careers.

N. M. Gender (2010) The primary focus of this study is on the career decisions made by women and the ways in which those decisions have allowed them to progress. In Nigeria, women's decisions to enter the workforce are typically influenced or constrained by a number of variables. Various elements like attitudes and customs, preconceptions, job fit, job prospects, and professional growth could either encourage or impede their involvement in the workforce. Like in other developing nations, there are a number of reasons why women are more likely to be working, including the need to support their immediate family and relatives, the rising standard of living, the desire to grow personally, and the expectation of career promotion.

Crozier (1999) While there aren't many studies on women's career decisions, those that have been done in various nations have been able to investigate and delve into the elements that have shaped women's choices in the banking sector. A person's job choice involves selecting a vocation that aligns with their environment, skills, talents, and qualifications. When attempting to comprehend the factors that influence women's occupational choice, two themes come to light.

Statement of the problem

The career development of women employees remains a pressing issue in contemporary workplaces, characterized by persistent gender disparities in advancement opportunities. Despite efforts to promote gender equality, women continue to encounter barriers such as unequal pay, limited access to leadership roles, and systemic biases. This impedes their professional growth and hampers organizational diversity and inclusivity goals. Moreover, factors such as family responsibilities and societal expectations often disproportionately affect women's career trajectories, further exacerbating the problem. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that encompass targeted mentorship, leadership training, flexible work policies, and cultural shifts within organizations. Without concerted action, the underrepresentation of women in senior positions not only perpetuates injustice but also deprives businesses of diverse perspectives and talent essential for innovation and success.

Need for the study

Understanding the career development needs of women employees is imperative for fostering workplace equality and maximizing organizational success. Research in this area is vital to identify the unique challenges and barriers faced by women in their career advancement. By exploring factors such as gender bias, work-life balance, access to mentorship and networking opportunities, and organizational policies, the study can illuminate areas for improvement in supporting women's professional growth. Furthermore, investigating the impact of cultural, societal, and organizational factors on women's career trajectories can inform strategies to create more inclusive and supportive work environments. Ultimately, this research contributes to the development of tailored interventions and policies aimed at promoting gender equity, enhancing retention rates, and harnessing the full potential of women in the workforce.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

One hundred and twenty samples were collected for this study through a purposive sampling method. This research article contains both primary and secondary data. However, this research paper primarily depends upon primary data which are directly collected from various women employee from Banking professional in Chennai through structured questionnaire. IBM SPSS 2020 was used for data analysis. Descriptive research design has been adopted in this study. Population for this study is undefined.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
20 – 30	38	31.7
31 – 40	39	32.5
41 – 50	23	19.2
51 & Above	20	16.7
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
UG	66	55.0
PG	34	28.3
Others	20	16.7
Income Per Month	Frequency	Percent
Below 20,000	30	25.0
20,001 - 40,000	41	34.2
40,001 - 60,000	29	24.2
60,001 & Above	20	16.7
Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	42	35.0
Unmarried	74	61.7
Divorced	4	3.3
Family Type	Frequency	Percent
Nuclear	87	72.5
Joint Family	33	27.5

INFERENCE

According to table 1, the majority of those who participated were between the ages of 31 and 40, with 32.5% and 39 participants, respectively. The majority of the participants had finished their Undergraduate Programme, with 55% and 66 participants, respectively. With 42.3% of the respondents falling in the wage range of 20001 - 40000, and the respondents were 41 out of 120, it is obvious from the above table that 61.7% of women employees are single. The majority of respondents come from nuclear families.

Table 2: Factor Analysis, Reliability and Validity test.

Factors	KMO Value	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Eigen Value	% of Variance	Cronbach's Alpha
		Chisquare	PValue			
Family and Health Challenges	0.840	601.475	0.001	3.408	30.979	0.959
Gender Discrimination	0.864	246.654	0.001	3.190	45.572	0.888
Difficulties in climbing the career ladder	0.825	564.122	0.001	4.317	53.963	0.875
Measure taken by the organisation	0.926	821.754	0.001	5.055	38.885	0.867

INFERENCE

The reliability of the study is between 0.867 - 0.959, it shows that the data have higher reliability. The KMO (Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin test) measure the overall adequacy of the sample which is between 0.825 – 0.926 which suggests that the data is useful for the data analysis.

FINDING

The causes that contribute to health challenges and family concerns varied significantly. These include problems in relationships, maternity leaves, marital breaks, relocation challenges, fear of assuming more responsibility, insufficient expertise, and obstacles in advancing one's job. The association between career advancement and gender disparity is neither very strong nor positive.

SUGGESTION

Career development for women employees in the banking sector is crucial for fostering gender diversity and ensuring equal opportunities. To facilitate their growth and advancement, several strategies can be implemented. Firstly, mentorship programs should be established, pairing female employees with experienced mentors who can provide guidance, support, and advice on navigating the complexities of the banking industry. These mentorship relationships can help women build confidence, expand their networks, and access opportunities for career progression. Additionally, training and development initiatives tailored specifically for women can address skill gaps and empower them to excel in their roles. These programs should focus on leadership skills,

financial literacy, and technical expertise relevant to banking operations. Flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options or alternative schedules, can accommodate the diverse needs of women, especially those balancing professional responsibilities with caregiving duties. Creating a supportive work environment that values diversity and inclusion is essential for retaining female talent in the banking sector. This involves promoting a culture of respect, equality, and fairness, where women feel empowered to voice their ideas and contribute to decision-making processes. Lastly, implementing policies to address gender bias and promote meritocracy in recruitment, promotion, and compensation practices is crucial for ensuring equal opportunities for women to advance in their banking careers. By prioritizing these strategies, banks can foster the professional growth and development of their female employees, ultimately driving greater gender equality and diversity in the industry.

CONCLUSION

The career development of women employees in the banking sector is a multifaceted issue that requires targeted interventions and a shift in organizational culture. Despite advancements in gender equality policies and initiatives, women continue to face systemic barriers such as gender bias, unequal opportunities for advancement, and work-life balance challenges. To address these issues, banking institutions must implement comprehensive strategies that foster a supportive and inclusive work environment. This includes initiatives such as mentorship programs, leadership training, and flexible work arrangements tailored to the unique needs of women. Additionally, promoting diversity at all levels of the organization, including leadership positions, is crucial for creating pathways for career progression for women. Furthermore, raising awareness and addressing unconscious biases within the workplace can help mitigate disparities in opportunities and recognition. Ultimately, fostering a culture of equality and empowerment not only benefits women employees but also contributes to the overall success and competitiveness of banking institutions. By prioritizing the career development of women employees and implementing measures to overcome existing barriers, the banking sector can harness the full potential of its diverse talent pool and drive sustainable growth in the industry. It's imperative for banking institutions to recognize that investing in the career advancement of women is not only a matter of social responsibility but also a strategic imperative for long-term success in today's dynamic and competitive landscape.

REFERENCES

- [1] Kumari, V. (2014). Problems and Challenges faced by Urban Working Women in India. National Institute of Technology, Odisha. Retrieved January 30, 2018, from <http://ethesis.nitrkl.ac.in/6094/1/E-208.pdf>
- [2] Venkatesh, M. (2017). India ranks 120th among 131 nations in women workforce, says World Bank report. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-ranks-120th-among-131-nations-in-women-workforce-says-world-bank-report/story-Q5AVD5aRlmLHA1RAFpnZuJ.html>
- [3] Center for Social Research. (2009). Women Managers in India-Challenges and Opportunities. Delhi: CSR.
- [4] Barati, A., Arab, R.O., & Masoumi, S.S. (n.d.). Challenges and Problems Faced By Women Workers in India. Human Resource Management, 76-82. Retrieved January 30, 2018, from <http://www.nevillewadia.com/images/Cronicle2015/Azadeh-Barati15.pdf>
- [5] Dwevy, Lalander (2000) conducted a qualitative investigation on women's career advancement and relationships. 34 3 pp. 193-203 in Canadian Journal of Counselling.
- [6] Nigeria's Vanguard Newspaper (March 2019). Banks' endeavors to tackle gender inequality. The information was taken from <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.vanguardngr.com/2019/03banks-in-efforts-to-address-gender-disparities-2/%3amp>
- [7] N. M. Gender (2010) and Labor Participation in Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities International Arts and Social Science Research Journal.
- [8] Crozier (1999) women's career development and relationships: A qualitative inquiry Canadian Journal of Counselling 34 3 pp193-203.

