Gender Case Studies from the Commonwealth
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Case Study Writers
Professor Stanley Modesto  Botswana Open University
Dr Ayodele Fagbemi  National Open University of Nigeria
Ms Meera Gungea  Open University of Mauritius
Dr Nalin Abeysekara  Open University of Sri Lanka
Dr Margarett Barnett  University of the Commonwealth Caribbean

Reviewer
Dr Ayodele Fagbemi
Dr Sandra Phelps

Advisors
Professor Romeela Mohee
Dr Godson Gatsha

Copyediting
Ms Amber Riaz
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Barriers to Women’s Advancement to Top Management Positions

Meera Gungea (Mrs)
BSc (Hons) Social Studies
MBA with specialization in Human Resources Management
Open University of Mauritius
Abstract

Gender as a construct, and how it impacts society, are themes that have been well researched and reported. Most of these studies tend to show that, although women have made significant advances in entering the managerial ranks of organisations, it is still a fact that men continue to dominate executive and senior management positions. What are the underlying explanations for these disparities? This case study first analyses the literature on the factors that affect women’s position in the labour market, and presents a synthesis of these. Then, using the interview technique, the cases of two women at the middle-management level are presented, highlighting factors affecting their professional life.

Objectives

1. To assess the factors that contribute to women’s position in the labour market
2. To allow students to relate to those factors in regards to the cases of the two middle-managers’ interviews

Introduction

Since ancient civilization, women have played a secondary role to that of men, one in which they were viewed as having a less important position than men. A woman’s role in society was mainly that of raising children and performing specific duties, such as caring for the household. With industrialisation and globalisation, a change in family structure was observed. This change was also apparent in the job market, where many women started joining the ranks of those working outside the home to earn a salary. While, initially, many women joined the labour market to contribute to the economic activities of their household, today, this participation is more than just for earning a wage. Women want to become self-sustaining individuals and be able to have jobs that guarantee career prospects. However, many women have had to sacrifice their career due to family obligations. Factors such as stereotyping, gender inequality at the workplace, and the glass ceiling are the main reasons why many women cannot progress as much as they would have liked.

Gender and the Glass Ceiling Concept

The glass ceiling concept is particularly concerned with the failure of women to reach senior and executive positions. According to Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, and Vanneman (2001), there are three criteria for the glass ceiling to occur, the first of which suggests that it occurs when, despite having similar abilities and potential as men, women face barriers in their career advancement. It also occurs due to limited promotional prospects, when women are discouraged from the initial position on the job ladder, thus raising men’s numbers at the top levels. Lastly, while organisations may be willing to pay out high salaries to women, they still hesitate to place them in positions where they can make an impact on the organisation’s profitability, due to which, the glass ceiling is created.
According to Lueptow, Garovich-Szabo, and Lueptow, M.B. (2001), theories and models explaining the emergence of gender-related behaviours in organisations, and thus the creation of a glass ceiling, fall into three categories:

(1) Biological explanations: Biological differences between men and women are thought to be a result of an "evolutionary model postulating constant gendered differences based on genetic patterns evolved from adaptation to differing reproductive challenges of early males and females" (Lueptow et al., p. 1). Thus, the biological model states that the differences between men and women are genetic.

(2) Socialisation explanations: Socialisation makes a big contribution in defining and shaping people through the different symbols, traditions, culture, beliefs and attitudes to which children are exposed. Socialisation, as a lifelong process, continues shaping people. This is how girls learn the attributes of being a female and the roles and responsibilities attached with the role. In many patriarchal societies, girls learn such differentiation from childhood, and this continues into adulthood, with the roles learnt being translated into behaviour.

(3) Structural/cultural explanations: Structural/cultural explanations have also received much more attention than biological models (Bartol et al., 2003) and are considered as "the most accepted explanation" (Lueptow et al., p. 1) for gender differences as they take a social constructionist approach. Social constructionist theories have argued that the definition of biological differences varies across cultures. Hence, society’s expectations produce and maintain inequality between genders (Wood & Eagly, 2002). It is further argued that “gender identity and differences are acquired through various developmental processes associated with life stages, such as schooling and work life" (Bartol et al., 2003, p. 9). Thus, this model argues that gender differences arise merely due to the perception of society.

These were the theories that depict a picture of the emergence of gender issues in organisations and the creation of the glass ceiling.

**Method of Data Collection**

The qualitative approach was adopted for this case study, using an in-depth interview and structured, open-ended questions to extract information. This type of interview allows the interviewer to further probe the interviewee in necessary cases. The sample consisted of two women who work at the middle-management level in a Mauritian public organisation. The respondents were given the fictitious names of Mrs Sheetal Singh and Mrs Alice Wong.

To contact the respondents, a call for participation was circulated through email to about ten women from the middle-management cadre. In the call, the objectives of the case study were communicated. Two of them responded positively to be interviewed, but requested that their names, as well as that of the organisation, be kept anonymous.
The next step was the design of a structured questionnaire such that probing could also be considered when necessary. The questions were all open-ended to allow maximum in-depth collection of information. The interview was carried out with one respondent at a time, to avoid their being influenced by each other’s responses. The interview lasted around one hour per participant.

**Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Respondent 1</th>
<th>Respondent 2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to you, what are the general barriers faced by women during their career?</td>
<td>There are a lot of barriers which prevent women to make progress in their career. For me, it is our environment that has shaped us to be the subordinate of men. For example, I have to look after my family before and after my work. This is my responsibility. I think it is the way that we have grown reflects our actual values, that is to be caring. As women, there are other sensitive and emotional factors which affect us. Fortunately we are blessed to have free education to everyone, and this has allowed my parents to send all four of us (my sisters) to school. Today I can say that I have been able to get a good job.</td>
<td>The barriers differ; it may be our family, society or workplace. Nowadays, the world has evolved. In every household it is not only the men who work but women also financially contribute to the family. For what I am today, it is my family which has supported me. Nowadays, most women are well educated. It was not an easy path to reach here. After getting married, I started to study a masters degree programme. Some months later, I was pregnant. It was difficult for me to concentrate in my studies, especially during the exams period. I gave birth to my baby and I was very busy looking after him. During the same period, I had to interrupt my studies. Three years later, I was pregnant for my second baby and the same story continued again. There was a vacancy but I could not apply. It was only after my second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that factors such as family, society and the organisation in which the woman works can have an impact in one's career?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>---</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong>: I am married and my husband has always supported me in my professional career. I live in a nuclear family and my husband helps me in all spheres.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Society</strong>: No, not really. We are well secured with the laws, e.g. discrimination against women, sexual harassment, and equal opportunity. These laws did not exist earlier.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong>: I agree that women do not have many opportunities to be at top levels in many organisations. But then this may not be everywhere as things have changed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that factors such as family, society and the organisation in which the woman works can have an impact in one's career?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong>: I live with my in-laws. When I come back home the meal is already prepared by my mother-in-law. I have enough time to look after the two children. Sometimes, I have to work overtime at the office, but this does not cause any problem to me because during my absence, my mother-in-law looks after the children who both attend primary school. As I am still studying, my husband helps me in doing my project works, etc. Till now, I do not think that my family is a barrier for my career.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Society**: To some extent I agree that society has impact in a woman's career. But nowadays, I think that there is no extreme gender discrimination between man and woman at work. From the 1980s we have seen an influx of women in the manufacturing sector. I think that the mind-set of people has changed considerably whereby both men and women
work and have equal access to education.

*Organisation:* The disparity between men and women has always existed since a long time ago. Today, I think that this mind-set has changed. Women can also progress just the way I have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does your employer or organisation promote equal access to men and women when it comes to promotions?</th>
<th>No, I have not really experienced this at my workplace.</th>
<th>I have heard that one lady was not appreciated among male subordinates when she became head. But then after she retired, we have not had any such issues.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apart from the above, what are other factors that might prevent women to climb the corporate ladder?</td>
<td>Women themselves! Some women are not yet ready to take on new challenges and they hesitate. They do not believe in themselves.</td>
<td>Sometimes you get golden opportunities but cannot grab them. Like overseas training. Here, I have seen women declining overseas training because they cannot leave their responsibilities behind. Even if in-laws agree to look after kids and husband, they still find it difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What factors help women progress in work?</td>
<td>Their determination, support from family, and support from the government.</td>
<td>I believe that women have the potentials to get to the top ladder of their organisations and this can be achieved if they are provided with necessary support from the family, society and the workplace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Findings
A content analysis of the responses received from the two respondents can be summarised as follows:

1. The traditional roles women have been playing in society still have an impact on their career prospects.
2. While families and societies are aware of this disparity, it is also to be highlighted that when families cooperate, women can progress.
3. Breaking the glass ceiling can be possible if women persevere to achieve career success.

Therefore, there is a growing need for people to change their attitudes towards women. More women will eventually aspire for higher positions if families collaborate instead of putting all household responsibilities on women. Parenthood and family care have pushed many women to make sacrifices, with women twice as likely to cite gender bias as a barrier.

This phenomenon is now a matter of serious concern for policy makers trying to increase women’s participation, for companies trying to improve equal opportunities, and for researchers trying to explain the phenomenon and to propose measures to resolve it.

Questions (40 Marks)

1. Discuss why women still face the glass ceiling problems in this modern era. You may refer to a comparison between Western and African countries. (20 marks)
2. What could be possible measures to ensure that women are proportionately represented in the top positions? (15 marks)
3. With reference to Q2, what are the strengths and weaknesses of your recommendations? (5 marks)

References


Case on Women in Management in Nigeria: Interpersonal Relationship between Women Managers

Ayodele Omoyiola Fagbemi (Phd)
National Open University of Nigeria
Abstract

The general assumption in Nigeria is that women do not do well under female bosses. This case is about such a relationship. The objective of the case study is to illustrate the poor relationship between women managers especially if there is only one level between them. The case study was part of a group of dilemmas narrated by women in management positions in Women in Management training programmes.

Key words: Interpersonal relationship, women managers

Introduction

There are many factors inhibiting the mobility of women into top management positions in organisations. One of these factors is that “women are their own worst enemies.” This refers to the lack of cooperation and acceptance of women as bosses in organisations. The most cited example is the reluctance of women to vote for women aspiring to be politicians. This is a phenomenon in a developing country like Nigeria. While the situation is improving every decade, there is still no doubt that women have not bonded enough to support each other. In organisations, most of the time, employees compete for their boss’s attention. This is a true situation, albeit with fictitious names. While it can be said that this is an extreme case and not applicable to all women, there is still no doubt that there is a poor relationship between women managers, especially if the managers are in the minority. Rather than cooperate with one another, minority group members tend to compete with one another and, if possible, run each other down.

Context of the Case

This study is within the context of women in management. The case is from a participant in a Women in Management training programme in Nigeria. It was her unresolved dilemma at the time of attending a training programme.

Objectives of the Case Study

The objectives of the case study are:

1. to identify the interpersonal relationship among women managers;
2. to proffer actions that can be taken to handle poor interpersonal relationship between women managers;
3. to recall cases of poor and good interpersonal relationships between women managers.

Method of Data Collection

The case study is a dilemma submitted by a woman manager in a Women in Management training programme between 2000 and 2008.
The Case

Joyce is one of the middle managers of Tango Broadcasting service. She is next in line to a female boss called Haluma, but both Joyce and her immediate female boss report to a male boss, called Mr Idrisu. Joyce is not in the good books of her female boss, Haluma. When Joyce walks into Haluma’s office and encounters Haluma and Idrisu talking, they immediately stop their intimate talks and make her feel unwelcome.

Haluma had to go on leave and as expected, handed over the section to Joyce. Haluma kept all main files, including the one in which Joyce had made recommendations on new programmes, locked up in her drawer. When Joyce took over, she fished out her file and sent it to their boss for appraisal of her programmes. Their boss approved them, and the first two programmes were aired before Haluma’s arrival.

When Haluma arrived, she raised hell, and asked why Joyce had the effrontery to send her file to the boss in her absence. Joyce replied that she did it in an official capacity as the head of the section. The friction persisted for some time. When a rural district, Morogoro, required a radio station, Joyce was posted to head the station, which is 18 kilometers from where Joyce and her husband lived.

Haluma was to go on a two-year course abroad. Two days before her departure, she met Joyce’s husband, and told him that Joyce sought a transfer to go to Morogoro because she was planning to divorce him. Joyce was shattered when she learnt this. Meanwhile, Haluma had travelled.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the key personal and official problems in this case?
2. What suggestions do you have for Joyce?
3. What role can Joyce’s husband play to restore harmonious interpersonal relations between Joyce and Haluma?
4. What cases of poor or good interpersonal relationship between women managers have you encountered in your organisations?
5. What measures can organisations take to ensure that these kinds of problems do not arise?
Case on Women in Management in Nigeria: Multiple Roles of Women

Ayodele Omoyiola Fagbemi (Phd)
National Open University of Nigeria
Abstract

The case study is about the issue of women who have to cope with official duties as well as being mothers and home managers. The objective of the case is to develop organisational and social strategies that could help women cope with these types of situations. The case study was narrated by one of the participants of a Women in Management programme in a training institution as part of women managers’ dilemma. Fictitious names have been used to protect the identities of those involved. Strategies to ease women’s multiple roles are proffered.

Key words: women managers, multiple roles, gender roles

Introduction

The multiple roles of women as mothers, home managers and employees are indisputable. Women’s roles include family obligations such as caring for their children and/or elderly parents as well as work responsibilities.

The demands of these roles can be stressful for women who have made the choice of being gainfully employed by working as employees in organisations. Gender equity and equality principles advocate that there should be fairness in the treatment of both male and female employees at work. Often, achieving gender equity in the workplace has implications for increasing levels of stress experienced by women especially in a patriarchal society such as Africa, where men are not expected to be home managers and caretakers of children.

Many organisations do not give priority to the training and development of women managers. A study conducted in Lagos State of Nigeria, involving 397 women managers revealed that 51% of the respondents said that they had gone on training just once or twice in the last five years, while 20% said that they had not been trained at all. Those not trained attributed the cause to gender discrimination and their organisations’ lukewarm attitude towards training of women (Fagbemi & Hassan, 2009).

Context of the Case

This study is within the context of women in management. The case is from a participant in a Women in Management training programme in Nigeria. It was her unresolved dilemma at the time of training.

Objectives of the Case Study

The objectives of the case study are to:
1. identify strategies for women managers to cope with their multiple roles;
2. address issues of the reluctance of male superior officers to nominate women managers for off-the-job training;
3. elicit similar cases like that of Mrs. Jones’s dilemma in their own country;
4. determine the prevalence of negative attitudes of top management male executives towards training women managers.

**Method of Collecting Data**

The case study is a dilemma submitted by women managers in Women in Management training programmes between 2000 and 2008. The names are fictitious to conceal the identities of those involved.

**The Case**

Mrs Jones, a feminist, accused her boss — who was also the Chief Executive of the establishment — of not nominating women for external training programmes, be it long or short. This was in April 2008. She further urged top management to desist from making excuses for women on the grounds of inability to leave their children and husbands to travel for such courses. Rather, women should be given the chance to decide for themselves, she argued.

In April of the same year, Mrs Jones was nominated to attend a four-week programme in the United Kingdom. Mrs Jones has four young children aged between one and seven years. Her husband was away in the United Kingdom on an 18-month attachment programme which commenced on October 10, 2006. He was due to return in March 2008, but he had also been nominated by his employers, a private sector organisation, to undergo another six-week training programme in another country effective from April, 2008.

Mrs. Jones’s problems were two fold. The first had to do with the children, three of whom were in nursery/ primary schools. They needed to be looked after, taken to school and back. Secondly, she needed someone to take care of her one year old boy. Even if Mrs. Jones had a maid, she could not play all these roles. Consequently, Mrs. Jones was tempted to decline the offer but such an action would be contradictory to her stand. So she looked for help.

She approached her sister-in-law, a single parent and trader, but she declined. This was her husband's sister residing in the same town with her. She also contacted a bachelor cousin-in-law who could drive to move in for the period and take the children to school, day-care centre and back home. In spite of his own work schedule as an auditor in a private firm, he willingly accepted, but the one year old boy still needed to be catered for, and this was beyond a bachelor’s capability.

The last saving grace was the unreserved willingness of her sister-in-law (her own brother’s wife) who lived 120 kilometers away to come and stay in her house to look after the one year old for the duration of the course. The trauma and the emotional stress that
Mrs Jones went through during the period can be better imagined than experienced. Among the visible prices Mrs Jones paid for accepting and utilizing the offer of her in-law was the irreparable damage done to her deep freezer, an important home appliance that had eased the domestic workload, and the cost of its replacement. The deep freezer is an important household appliance that assists women to cope with managing limited time due to the multiple roles of an office job and managing the home. It also assists in managing home finances as bulk purchases of freezable food items can be made. In addition, she remained indebted to her cousin, and sister-in-law for a long time.

**Questions**

1. What problems do women face in carrying out their multiple roles?
2. What assistance can employers, NGOs, a government as well as husbands render to working mothers in the discharge of their multiple roles?

**Reference**

Female Graduate and Employee became an Entrepreneur: A Case Study from Sri Lanka

Dr Nalin Abeysekara
Senior Lecturer
Department of Management Studies
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
Open University of Sri Lanka
Abstract

This case study discusses the success story of Pushipika, a Sri Lankan female graduate of Open University of Sri Lanka. Her case illustrates the effects of her passion and determination from an early stage of life that propelled her to become a celebrated entrepreneur. The case contains many factors that contributed to the success story of a woman who successfully balanced her home and office life.

Key Concepts: Management, Gender, Entrepreneurship, Economic Growth

Introduction

Entrepreneurship can be considered to be one of the important dimensions for the growth of a country. The education system of a given community needs to understand this as the development of any country is measured by using the number of successful entrepreneurs operating in the given context. For anyone to become a successful entrepreneur, there should be a better understanding of different success stories. Commitment, dedication, the willingness to take challenges, discipline, and educational background can all be considered as requirements for entrepreneurship. More importantly, it can be seen that female entrepreneurship has become a global issue with many implications.

Objectives of the Case Study

The objectives of the case study are to:

1. identify the challenges that female entrepreneurs face in Sri Lanka or in any country;
2. describe the importance of entrepreneurship in the economic development of the nation.

Method of Data Collection

The methods used for data collection were interview and content analysis.

Pushipika’s Case

Section 1
Pushipika Subhashini Gunathilake Mullakanda is the eldest in her family. Her only sibling, a brother, was born five years after the birth of Pushipika. Both her parents were government servants who worked hard to make her and her brother’s lives better. She was admitted to St. Joseph’s Girls’ School, Nugegoda for her primary education in 1980. The following is her story in her own words.

Section 2
At St. Joseph’s Girls’ School, Nugegoda, I was a brilliant student who was very distinguished and popular among teachers and students, especially because of my academic
achievements, values and my singing talents. I was a shining star in the school. I had lots of
dreams and goals to achieve from childhood. Also, I had enough courage, determination
and support from my family to achieve them. It was my dream to gain admission to a
leading school in Colombo. In 1985, I proved myself for the first time to my parents and
school by being one of five students who got through the Grade 5 scholarship examination.
This is one of the most competitive examinations for students in Sri Lanka, and based on
the results of the exam, students can transfer to prominent national schools in the country.
However, my marks were not enough to win entry into a leading school in Colombo, but I
never gave up. I was determined to get very good results in the Grade 10 (Ordinary Level
exam—O/L-like Grade 5) exam. This examination also enables students to enter some well
known schools in Sri Lanka. My dream came true. In 1990, I sat for my O/L exam and was
among the best students in our school. With my results I found no difficulty in entering
Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo in 1991 for my Grade 12 exam. This is Advanced Level (A/L). It
is an examination that students can use to enter universities in Sri Lanka. My dream had
finally come true.

Section 3
I always wanted to achieve the highest level in whatever I did. Visakha Vidyalaya had all the
facilities and resources for me to achieve my goals. I was in the choir and won lots of
awards. I also took part in several plays and displayed my talents. My final dream in my
school career was to get through the A/Ls with flying colours, and enter university for my
higher studies. Ultimately I did that, too. I can still recall how much glory and happiness I
brought to my parents, the school and my teachers by my achievements. I obtained
“Visharad Upadi” (a degree-equivalent qualification for Indian Music) from Lucknow
University, India, after ten years of vocal training in Classical Music. I was also selected to
take part in the chorus singing in Dr Ediriweera Sarachchandra’s famous stage plays
“Maname” and “Sinhabahu” which was a great opportunity for me.

Section 4
Before entering university, I was employed at a leading packaging company in Sri Lanka,
where my destiny was determined. I had good experience in marketing, and decided to
develop my career along that line. Also, at the age of 21, I met my life partner there, who
was a secret admirer of mine. In 1996 I had to leave my employment when I got university
admission. I entered a totally different world. Ragging, scolding, filth — all were very
unpleasant and unfamiliar to me, and the first few months in the university were very hard
for me. I was like a withered flower. Whatever the challenges I was faced with, my mother
was there to counsel me always, which was a great relief to me. Hence, at no point did I
ever give up, since I had dreams to achieve. The bunch of very close and loving friends with
whom I cherished my sweet memories were always a strength to me. We studied together,
ate together and, basically, we shared our lives together.

In our first lecture, I was inspired to pursue higher studies to obtain a professional
qualification by my first lecturer, Dr Saman Dasanayake, which was a turning point in my
life. I decided to also do a postgraduate Diploma in Chartered Institute of Marketing (which
is a professional qualification of the UK) to earn a marketing qualification, while reading for my Bachelor of Business Administration degree at Colombo University. I discussed this issue with my parents. But I realized that my father could not afford to pay for such an expensive course as CIM. However, that was not an obstacle to me. I decided to work again. I was employed while being an undergraduate. I had to face lots of challenges. When the earnings and perks were not enough, I found better jobs at the expense of my lectures and study times. I studied for the exams in buses. I worked five days and studied two days out of seven days in a week. My dear friends never left me when I was facing all of these challenges. They extended their helping hands whenever I wanted. I also got support from my then workplace, Suntel Ltd., to complete my studies.

**Section 5**

I was the only undergraduate in my batch to simultaneously follow a full-time degree course and a professional course of studies with full-time employment. My courage and determination were skyhigh. I always had a goal to achieve which kept me strong and focused. I was penalized and punished for not attending lectures and I had to sit for the final year exam with the junior batch. In 2000, I obtained the Post Graduate Diploma in Marketing (PGDM-CIM) and in 2001, I graduated from the University of Colombo with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

I got married in 2000, which was another turning point in my life. I had to leave my beloved parents at their retirement, which made me a little uncomfortable and sad. I settled down with his family. My husband, soon after our marriage, became an entrepreneur with lots of plans to execute in the future.

My dream to work for MAS Holdings, one of the largest non-listed conglomerates on the Colombo Stock Exchange in terms of market capitalization in the large apparel industry of Sri Lanka, came true in the year 2001. I was better off with better perks and worked there for more than one year. When my husband wanted my helping hand to incorporate and expand his small business, I had to quit my job to help him. It was a major sacrifice that I had to make in my life.

Thus, in the year 2002, I became a shareholder and a director of Mount Packs Pvt. Ltd. founded by my husband in 1996. We were blessed with a baby boy in 2004 and I had to work day and night to develop the business which expanded to a new location in 2005. I had to face lots of challenges, but I was happy that I was able to help my husband to achieve what he wanted. Business was growing faster than expected and I carefully developed a system and recruited more staff to take over work from us, in an exercise of delegating responsibility. My dream from childhood, which is to release some songs of mine, came true in 2006, at the peak of that busy time as an entrepreneur.

**Section 6**

In 2007, after the second baby came, I decided to be committed to my family as a wife of a busy husband. It was not difficult to make up my mind, to sacrifice my future plans for the
betterment of our whole family. For one year, I was a housewife, and carefully brought up my sons. But I felt that I was getting outdated, and was wondering whether I could coach at least my sons, so that they would have a bright future.

When my youngest son completed one year, I joined Lyceum International School where my elder son was studying, to occupy myself with something worthwhile, while taking care of my kids.

I really enjoyed teaching Business Studies for the Cambridge A/L, and experienced a great satisfaction. It was helpful for my personal development as well. For more than five years, I helped the school produce matured, broadminded students with much more experience and exposure. I joined Toast Masters Club to improve my presentation and language proficiency.

Still, I felt that I had not reached my “self actualization” state despite all of these achievements. I wanted to excel in my singing, acting and writing talents by blending them with my administration and marketing skills to brand my name.

Section 7
I had to leave my job as a teacher to start my own venture. I knew it would help my motherland with more wealth creation. In 2013, I started my new incorporated business “Right Minds Pvt. Ltd.” that focused on:

1. Education
2. Entertainment
3. HR solutions
4. Printing solutions
5. Event Management

I started publishing my own books as well as of those of other authors. Parallel to that, my own Academy was founded to train the next generation as a long term HR solution. I am planning to convert the Academy to a finishing school in the future. I also work on event management with some companies I have worked for as well. I achieved so much because of my honesty, passion and determination. I was blessed to be admired by so many for my values and talents. The secret of my success was that I put 200% effort into whatever I did and I was the happiest at the end of the day. Today, I am a dedicated mother, wife, daughter, responsible citizen, and an entrepreneur. Having a balance between all of these roles is a great challenge to me. The year 2014 was a remarkable year for me. I needed to complete my MBA and start reading for my PhD, release my very own, first, music album, and host a few major events in the country. I know that very soon I can celebrate my success with all the strengths I have. I need to leave my footprint when I am gone.
Discussion Questions

1. Explain the qualifications and credentials of Pushipika (Sections 1, 2 and 3)
2. What was her role at MAS Holdings? (Section 5)
3. What about the teaching experience of Pushipika? (Section 6)
4. What is the name of her first business venture? (Section 7)
5. What are the roles played by Pushipika in her life? (Section 7)

Further Reading


From Housewife to Entrepreneur: A Case Study of a Mauritian Woman

Meera Gungea (Mrs)
BSc (Hons) Social Studies
MBA with specialization in Human Resources Management
Open University of Mauritius
Abstract

This case study analyses the historic transition of women from their traditional roles to the formal and informal work sectors using Mauritius, a sub-Saharan African country, as an example. The economic status of the country and how women were positioned are also discussed. The economic transition, together with its impact on women, is demonstrated in the case of Jenny as a typical example of going “from grass to grace.”

Introduction

Despite worldwide socioeconomic growth, many countries still strive to achieve development encompassing the various strata of society. Stratification exists at various levels, but minimising the inequality in gender, aiming mostly towards a socioeconomic boost of women, remains one of the biggest challenges. Many sub-Saharan societies are mostly male-dominated, and women have a disadvantageous status. Women in developing countries suffer from direct and indirect discrimination. Literacy rates, work participation, and involvement in businesses remain low among this group as compared to men. Statistics have shown that, during phases of the economic crisis, the first category of people to lose their jobs or to suffer financially is generally that of women.

The feminization of poverty is a threat in developing countries that is not addressed with appropriate measures. Mauritius has not been spared this phenomena; it witnessed a major economic crisis in the post-independence period, but then successfully re-emerged. Having a majority of women with low education levels and skills made the situation more complicated. In fact, women spend more hours working per day as they carry the bulk of the workload in family life. Hafkin and Huyer (2006), identified five different types of empowerment routes as related to self-efficacy, where self-efficacy defined by Bandura (1997) as one’s belief in his/her capacity to employ the necessary resources as required in a particular situation. Included in these five routes are the need for control over income and family resources, increased income, and access to employment and participation in the work force at a high level with higher pay. This case study shows the pathway taken by Mauritius regarding the empowerment of women while developing its economy.

Objectives of the Case Study

The objectives of the case study are to:

- expose gender related problems women face in starting their own business;
- allow students to compare the situation of women in their countries with Jenny’s case;
- stimulate suggestions for improving the condition and position of women in business.
**Method of Data Collection**

This case used the qualitative approach, where the aim was to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. Here, the main aim was to understand how a well-known woman entrepreneur managed to achieve success in her business. It was also important to understand the various reasons that contributed/hampered this success. The technique that was used was the in-depth interview. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher, was used to reach Jenny. The method through which data was obtained was the semi-structured interview. The interview lasted for 2 hours and the answers were then analysed and transcribed. The findings are presented below.

**Background of the Case Study**

The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite notable in Mauritius. Entrepreneurship in Mauritius has had a successful historical path. It was near the end of the 1970s that the potential of entrepreneurship in the country’s economic development strategy was first recognised. Policy makers believed it was more appropriate to create productive employment through small enterprises. In other words, the focus was on the creation of jobs and new avenues to include the idle labour force with people engaged in productive labour, in order to benefit at the individual and national levels. Though education was free for all, access at all levels was not possible for everyone. Thus, most families preferred further educating males over females. This situation positioned many females at lower levels in organisations when compared to males. The Mauritian government, through the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment as well as the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF), is making available a series of facilities to lessen the hardship of women. One way to absorb these women in the economic system was to create an environment conducive to their development. Making unskilled women financially independent was a challenge — this was finally achieved through the entrepreneurship programme.
Some of the initiatives are:

- the creation of a Small Scale Industrial Unit under the aegis of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in 1975 to identify projects and provide technical, management and economic guidance and assistance to existing and prospective small scale entrepreneurs;
- the setting up of the Small Industries Development Organisation in 1983, responsible for the promotion of small scale industry, the preparation of feasibility studies, and the provision of services and information to entrepreneurs;
- the promulgation of the Small Scale Industries Act in 1988;
- upgrading of the 1988 Act in 1993 into the Small and Medium Industries Development Organisation (SMIDO) Act, which gave a new boost to SMEs;

The microfinance project which encourages self-employment of the poor by providing them with loans and finance has been successful, and a Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups assists micro-enterprises. The Development Bank of Mauritius also provides below-market interest rates to micro-enterprises.

Mauritius is one of the African nations aiming towards empowering women in all aspects so that they become independent and contribute to the island’s economic development. The economic empowerment of women has taken a significant priority of the government. Thus, various measures have been taken to engage women in the economy of the country. These measures are in line with the Millennium Development Goals which Mauritius wants to achieve, namely, promoting gender equality, and the empowerment of women. Out of these measures, government policies which promote entrepreneurship have been found to be a motivation to create more entrepreneurs, including women entrepreneurs (Sullivan & William, 2012).

According to national statistics of Mauritius, facts about unemployment in the year 2014 are as follows:

- 44,500 unemployed comprised of 19,900 males (45%) and 24,600 females (55%)
- Around 18,800 (42%) of them were aged below 25 years
- More than half (51%) of the unemployed were single. Among males, the majority (69%) was single, while among females, the majority (64%) was never married.

In line with measures to empower women, the fact that women and men do not have equal access to resources was also considered. Hence, various measures regarding policies and laws were adopted to give women equal access. They include the right to vote, access to free education, access to equal working rights, access to economic independence, access to equal salary compensations, access to rights against domestic violence, access to gender equality, and access to any device likely to improve their status.
Case Study of Jenny Right

To maintain anonymity of the entrepreneur (who is a successful woman entrepreneur), this paper refers to the interviewee as Jenny Right. The following is the analysis of the data obtained.

Jenny Right started her web-design advertising business as soon as she completed university studies in the late 90s. With her degree in hand, unlike most young graduates, she wanted to have her own business, but launching her own company was a real struggle at that time, since she was very young and investors hesitated to collaborate with her. Investors would commonly ask if she could provide sufficient proof of her ability to repay loans in case her business failed. Others would just not cooperate, as they could not trust her ability to run a business and repay the loan since she was a woman with no experience in business.

Financial assistance was needed to start up the company. So Jenny sought the help of schemes available in the country, although the sum collected was less than what she needed. With that limited amount of funding received, she managed to set up her business with fewer than five people working for her. To add to her worries, people hesitated to work in the company since the job was not secure. They could find themselves without a job in the event the company did not secure tenders. Those who finally joined were mostly graduates with no experience, and who could not easily find a job.

At the very start, profits did not flow. Jenny found herself without a salary for months as she had to give priority to her employees. In terms of assignments, her company did not get good offers in the beginning. But with time, she managed to convince people about her business and started getting interesting offers. Gradually, her business started to expand, and today, she has around 50 people working for her company. Her operations began at a national level and gradually expanded to the international market.

The main challenges Jenny faced at the beginning were mostly a lack of information/advice on how to start an enterprise, start-up financing, finding the right contacts for her business venture, and most importantly, her gender. However, her self-confidence kept her moving towards her goals.

As Mauritius started to promote entrepreneurship, many policies were implemented, such as financial aids, awareness of, and access to, business support, management skills, and entrepreneurial skills which finally opened many avenues for her business.

As a matter of fact, in the early 90s, men held most of the top positions in most organisations. Women’s emancipation was not yet at its peak. Though education is free, access to quality education with the required resources was costly. Hence, in many families, when it came to offering tuition to children to send them for higher education, boys were favoured. Women, therefore, were less skilled, and the possibility of reaching high career heights was limited. Furthermore, higher status jobs also mean higher responsibilities.
Thus, to achieve the standards required by added responsibilities, much involvement in terms of time is required. Women, being considered main caregivers, have been forced (often voluntarily) to either give up promotions or to not apply for promotional posts so as to cater to the needs of their children.

Though Jenny had to face such challenges, what kept her going was the desire to be independent and autonomous, to be a woman who could make her own decisions and reach self-achievement. These were barriers many women had to face to find their independent status in a patriarchal society, especially when it came to managing a company.

Today, she believes that all the hard work and challenges have helped her define her personality and set an example for other women, one that shows that they, too, can achieve a status if they want. The various policies available in the country have also helped her to set up her own business.

Questions (40 marks)

1. Culture can be an important determinant of women’s progress or failure in business. Discuss this in relation to your country. (25 marks)
2. What can be the measures to address this? Identify possible barriers to women’s participation in medium and large scale businesses. (15 marks)

References


Further Reading


Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Jamaican Case

By
Dr. Margarett Barnett
University of the Commonwealth Caribbean
Abstract

The Jamaican social landscape is replete with instances of sexual harassment. The pervasiveness has caught the attention of legislators who have been under pressure from gender-based groups to pass laws that will protect victims of sexual harassment. There is a school of thought which theorizes that sexual harassment is about Women’s Liberation “mumbo jumbo.” However, increasingly, there is data to suggest that men, like women, are harassed. This case examines a case of alleged sexual harassment in a multinational organisation in Jamaica, the headquarters of which is in the United Kingdom. The headquarters has a well-developed and operational sexual harassment policy, and breaches of the policy are dealt with clinically and swiftly. The operation in Jamaica was expected to follow the policy precisely; each employee has a copy of the policy, and is aware of the procedures for reporting a breach. Breaches of the policy guidelines have never been tested in the Jamaican context, however, even though our subject, Miss Black of Blue Sip Distillery, gave specific instances of suspected cases of sexual harassment. Several interviews were held with Miss Black, where her experience was documented with care taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality. A desk review was done of the company’s sexual harassment policy.

Introduction

There is enough evidence to show that sexual harassment is a serious problem that is under-regulated in Jamaica. The problem is worse in workplaces where gender inequalities are pronounced and visible. Without a legislative framework, there is underreporting and impunity. While the Jamaican legislators have shown a willingness to develop common-law rules in response to cases of sexual harassment, there is an urgent need for appropriate policy guidelines to clarify the boundaries of what is prohibited. The policy guidelines should also be provided to encourage prevention of sexual harassment, an early response mechanism within workplaces, and fair treatment of workers during disciplinary proceedings to ensure just and effective relief. Even though there is not a wealth of empirical research on sexual harassment in the Caribbean, there is enough to paint a clear picture that shows that it is a serious concern for workers and especially for workers in strongly gender-segregated workplaces — whether it is professions dominated by men like Blue Sip Distillery, the police force, or ones dominated by women with male managers, as is the case with some factories.
Objectives of the Study

This case is documented in response to the Commonwealth of Learning’s request for gender-based cases in its member countries. Specifically, the objectives of the case study are to:

- provide information on sexual harassment issues in Jamaica;
- give opportunities for students to suggest the content of an organisation’s sexual harassment policy;
- sensitize students to the negative effects of sexual harassment.

Method of Data Collection

This type of research lends itself to a Descriptive Qualitative (Ethnography/Case Study) methodology. Detailed descriptions of the specific situation(s) leading to an alleged case of sexual harassment were gathered using interviews and document reviews. The subject of the interview (Miss Black) described things as they were. Careful note was made of the challenges faced in carrying out her duties once she had availed herself of the sexual harassment policy. Miss Black took the necessary steps to report the charges which led to an investigation, leading to a change overall.

Jasmine Black’s Case

Section 1
Jasmine Black was a single parent, and was obliged to take care of two sisters along with her young daughter upon the death of their mother. She denied herself a tertiary education so her sisters and daughter could have an education. When she was employed as a production assistant at the Blue Sip Distillery in Kingston, she was prepared to work very hard to keep her job. Jasmine was one of three females and 60 males working in the production department with a male boss. Jasmine knew when she took the job that she would be required to work on shift, and that no transportation would be provided when she worked the night shift.

Three months into her employment, Jasmine was placed on the night shift. She was on her way home, on the long stretch from the production department to the exit, in order to catch the 11:00 p.m. bus to Hellshire in Portmore, where she lived, when a car pulled up beside her and asked if she wanted a lift to the bus stop. Jasmine did not hesitate, as she knew it was her manager and she also knew that her ten year old daughter was at home alone, so any opportunity to ensure she did not miss the bus was welcome. The ride was uneventful, and she was able to get the bus and reach home in a reasonable time, so she could see her daughter before she fell asleep.

The following day, one of the men who worked in her department and had apparently seen her when she got into the car of Harry Bent, the Production Manager, said to her sardonically, “dem man deh a rapist.” Harry Bent is between 35 and 40 years old, and has
been working with the company for ten years. He was very good at his job and was considered to be a visionary whose ability to plan and execute was without question. He was held in high regard by top management and interacted well with his peers. Harry was considered a charmer, very good looking with good interpersonal skills, especially when it came to women. His male coworkers, however, regarded him as a bully who got anything he wanted.

One day, Jasmine was having lunch in the canteen when she overheard a group of guys talking about Harry, who by then, was referred to as “boss man.” One man said, “‘boss man’ is weird, him seem to take a liking to the ladies who reject his passes.” Another chimed in, “what the boss wants, the boss gets!” and they both looked at her wryly. Jasmine, in relating the conversation to her friend, said “You have to be strong to work in the production department. The guys on the floor are so x-rated, and I know they are trying to taunt me. They pin up all sorts of outrageous posters in the department, of women with enlarged derrieres with boobs showing.” In lamenting, she said, “The ladies are so disgusted, but don’t believe that if they complained to Harry Bent he will do anything about it.”

One day, as Jasmine was walking down a corridor leading to the Bottling Plant, she overheard a conversation between two of her male coworkers. Though not directed at her, she could not help but overhear that they were agreeing emphatically that women should not be given detail-oriented jobs, such as the one advertised, because men are better able to focus in the workplace. Their conversation was punctuated with words like “chicks,” “damsels,” “bitches,” and the like, spoken in the local vernacular. The male supervisor for the production department had been transferred to the Bottling Plant, so there was a vacancy in that department. The vacant position was advertised, and Jasmine knew that she had been meeting and exceeding her targets, and stood a good chance of being promoted to the supervisory position if she applied, save for the fact that she did not have a Bachelor’s degree, which the position required. However, there was one glimmer of hope. Blue Sip had a professional development programme, which gave each worker the opportunity to work in a supervisory capacity in the plant. Jasmine had worked on four occasions in this role, and each time her evaluation got progressively better, which accounted for her being a supervisor on so many occasions.

Under Mr Bent’s leadership and supervision, Jasmine was given opportunities that gave her more autonomy and authority than the other women in the department. She was a top producer and always delivered on target, because of which she thought that she had proven that she could perform well if recommended for the supervisory position. However, she was not recommended by Harry Bent for the selection process. At 5:00 p.m. when Jasmine was about to “clock out,” her phone rang; it was Mr Bent: ”Meet me in my office in 20 minutes!” His voice was crisp and commanding. Jasmine pondered aloud “What the hell did I do now?” Beverley who was standing near her said, “Is what you do the ‘big boss’ now?” At approximately 5:20 p.m. Jasmine knocked hesitantly on Mr Bent’s office door and a very authoritative voice answered, “Come in.” She was offered a seat in a chair placed in front of his desk. “I am putting a package together for your promotion, only one thing is
going against you right now, you do not have a first degree, but I will try and sell you.” As he spoke, he shifted his computer screen and Jasmine was astounded to see her face enveloping the entire screen. “Where did Mr Bent get that picture of me, and why does he have it as his screen?” she thought. She immediately became uncomfortable, as her mind raced back to the conversation in the canteen: “What ‘big boss’ wants, ‘big boss’ gets.” “What is he up to?” she thought. Her thoughts were interrupted: “By tomorrow you will hear if you are selected,” he said, with a weird smile, as if he could hear her question.

Section 2
The phone rang at 5:00 p.m. the following day. Mr Bent was in the habit of summoning the ladies to his office for meetings late in the evenings after everyone had gone; and no one dared to refuse to attend those late meetings. “See me in my office, Jasmine.” Jasmine contemplated whether or not she should respond to the request; after all, it was past working time, and he could not compel her to attend any meeting at that time. It was 5:15 p.m. when Jasmine knocked on his door, “You are 15 minutes late!” he said, but Jasmine did not offer an apology or explanation, she only stood there with a blank look on her face. Harry leaned back in his chair with his hands behind his head, and in a very relaxed mood he said, “You are one lucky ‘gal’ (woman), you have been promoted.” After a while, he stood up with his arms outstretched and moved towards her, “Give me a hug girl, you are going places, just play your cards right.” As he said that, he squeezed her seductively. Jasmine immediately knew things would not be the same.

After that encounter, until two months before Christmas, Harry Bent and Jasmine had no direct encounter. The Christmas season is always a demanding and stressful time for Blue Sip, and Harry Bent always provided avenues for his supervisors to de-stress. Jasmine never enquired as to the nature of these activities but she knew that they were welcomed. After a very challenging and demanding shift, Harry invited Jasmine to have a drink with him. “I’ll take a pass,” she said, but Harry would have none of it and insisted. Eventually, she gave in, and they agreed to go to a cocktail place in New Kingston.

Section 3
Harry Bent lived in the general vicinity of the cocktail place. They agreed that Jasmine would park her car at his home and they would travel to the venue in his car. The place was really cozy. The cocktails were great and they chatted about everything — work, life and the festive season. Jasmine was really having a good time and even chided herself for nearly missing the opportunity to enjoy such a relaxing evening. Jasmine was feeling tired and decided it was time to go home. They rode back to his apartment in an uncomfortable silence. When they got there, Jasmine alighted from the car and politely said, “Thanks for the evening,” and was about to open her car door, when Harry said, “What’s the rush?” and invited her inside. Jasmine was trying to avoid going inside his house, but wanted to get to the restroom so, against her better judgment, she went inside.

Once she was out of the restroom, Harry insisted that she sit for a while, as the night was still young. Jasmine reasoned that Harry had made many passes at her and had not
succeeded, and so, she felt reasonably safe that if he tried anything she would overpower him. As she sat on the sofa, Harry came and stood behind her and started to massage her shoulders. “Don’t do that!” Jasmine exclaimed twice and got up to leave. As she stood up, Harry was right in her face, too close for comfort. “Talk with your mouth and not your hands,” Jasmine said curtly. She had to run away from Harry to another area of the room as, by then, he had blocked her from leaving the house. He began chasing her around the room; he eventually caught her, lifted her off her feet by holding her around the waist and ran towards his bedroom. She was glad that she had worn a pair of trousers. As he was about to enter the room, she placed a foot across the door on either side making entry difficult. At this point, she spoke in raised tones, which could have drawn attention from neighbours, asking him to put her down. This prompted him to let her go, and she hastily left his apartment, got in her car and drove away.

Section 4
Jasmine knew that there is a sexual harassment policy for Blue Sip, but reasoned that no one would take her seriously as they would question what she was doing at his home. On the other hand, Harry Bent was well respected, and from what had been rumoured, the persons at the top were personal friends of Harry and would ridicule her. Jasmine felt ashamed, used, and did not want to go to work the next morning. She did everything to avoid the “boss man” the next day. This was achieved for an entire day. However, as was now the norm, he wanted her to attend a meeting at 5:00 p.m. in his office. Jasmine considered not going but was fully aware of the dismissal of persons who dared to cross Mr Bent’s path. Jasmine thought of the mortgage for the small apartment she had just bought and her daughter who had just entered high school. She had no choice. So at 5:00 p.m. she knocked on his door. He asked her to wait outside as he was finishing up a meeting.

At approximately 5:45 p.m. he beckoned her to enter and sit. With a smile on his face he said “[Jas, you need to lighten up, you are too uptight! How about dinner?” As he spoke, his outstretched arm had a credit card that he was offering her, “Buy anything you want.” Jasmine looked him directly in the eyes and said “Leave me in peace to do my work. I want to work, nothing else.” He would not take her refusal of his offers, and pushed harder. He would call her to his office for no reason and had her wait until he completed several activities before he acknowledged her presence.

Mr Bent seized every opportunity to openly reprimand and use demeaning language for Jasmine in front of her fellow team members. She considered quitting, but quickly dismissed the thought. Jasmine made sure she did her work well and made absolutely no mistakes as Bent was looking for anything, no matter how minute, to dismiss her. The work environment had gotten nasty. One evening, Mr Bent called a meeting of the entire department at 5:00 p.m. He used the meeting to curse at, and berate, Jasmine.

Section 5
Competition was forcing Blue Sip to rethink strategy and cut operational costs. There were rumours about a staff reduction. Jasmine was cognizant that in this exercise, anyone could
go but she was optimistic that she stood a good chance of retaining her job as her performance was "A1." That optimism was short-lived as she was called to a meeting with Mr Bent and four other managers, where she was advised that she had lost her job.

However, there was an ironic turn of events. Mr Bent had sexually harassed one woman too many. Angella, the CEO’s assistant, who was jokingly called “Mangella” because of her prudishness, had called “Speak Up” in the UK at the parent company, to report an act of sexual harassment by Mr Bent. Representatives flew immediately to investigate the allegation.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What should be the content of a sexual harassment policy?
2. Is there a clear case of sexual harassment at Blue Sip Distillery? Support your answer with evidence from the case.
3. What are the different types of sexual harassment? Which one(s) are evident in this case?
4. What ethical theories make the most sense (utilitarian, rights, justice) concerning this case?
5. Develop a sexual harassment training programme for Blue Sip Distillery.
Women and Leadership in Botswana Agriculture

Professor Stanslaus Modesto (Dlitt et Phil)
Gaborone University College of Law and Professional Studies
Abstract

This case study explores experiences of women in agriculture in Botswana, with special focus on peasant/subsistence farming. The farming activities centre around three aspects, namely, crop farming, small stock farming and cattle-farming. The study creates awareness of the phenomenon of abandonment of rural life by able-bodied men when they go to South Africa as indentured labour, or to urban centres for some form of employment, leaving the women, the elderly men and women, children, and the sick in the more remote rural areas. The sick are usually victims of HIV/AIDS, who have returned from the cities and towns. The study demonstrates how women are overburdened with the responsibilities of fending for the above-mentioned in a poverty stricken environment, where males are, culturally, more privileged. The case study shows that women have no title over stock and land. It also shows that drought is a menace that frustrates women’s efforts to survive. A part of the solution lies in empowering women by giving them basic training in skills for rural agriculture. However, the college dedicated to this type of training focuses more on men than women. The training is not tailored to address the unique problems faced by women who should be empowered to lead in rural agriculture. This case study also shares the phenomenon of Remote Area Dwellers (RAD), who have historically been referred to as Bushmen (a term considered derogatory). The more acceptable names of this very mobile group of people are Basarwa or San. The study shows that in Botswana, people and places are separated by vast distances, and the government of the country is said to be coming up with strategies to educate women for leadership in the Botswana agricultural sector.

Key words: abandonment of rural life, Remote Area Dwellers, empowerment

Introduction

The government of Botswana has observed that agriculture provides livelihood for more than 80% of the population, but supplies only about 50% of food needs, and accounts for only 3% of the GDP (Government of Botswana Economic Snapshot, 2004). In fact, subsistence farming and cattle raising predominate. The sector is plagued by erratic rainfall and poor soils. The Ministry of Agriculture has observed that the proportion of men to that of women who are role players in agriculture is in favour of women, who are observed to be the majority, yet statistics show that only 36% of farm holders are females (Ministry of Agriculture, 2008). Essentially, therefore, it shows that the participation of women, their leadership, and decision-making in agriculture is a gendered issue.

Botswana is a landlocked country located in Southern Africa, north of South Africa. It occupies an area of 600,370 square kilometres, of which 585,000 kilometres are agricultural land. Most of the country is near-desert, with the Kalahari occupying the western part of the country. The eastern part is hilly, with salt lakes in the north.
Objectives of the Case Study

The objectives of the case study are to:

- infer the role of women in positions of leadership in the agriculture sector of Botswana;
- portray the situation, as experienced by women, in the agriculture set up of the country;
- indicate how women are burdened with poverty and disease, especially when they have to care for HIV/AIDS patients and orphans;
- look at the situation through the eyes of the observer who takes a trip into the rural environment;

Method of Data Collection

To achieve the preceding objectives, two methods of data collection were used: unstructured oral interview and observation. The former was pursued informally and through questioning of respondents. Field notes were taken in the process for later analysis and interpretation. The second method was observation by all three researchers, following which, insights were compared. The data were then used to compile the report.

A Journey into the Countryside

Our team of three set out from Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana, in November 2009. This is the month when rains begin to occur, and farmers are galvanised into farming activities of all sorts, including clearing the bush, tilling the land, and tending goats and cattle. The greenery, by that time, has covered stretches of land, and new life among the livestock is visible, since there is water around.

The objective of our mission was to meet women peasant farmers in agriculture, and hear their side of the story while also observing activities they would be engaged in. As we passed Kumakwane and Tamaga (villages along the road to Khanye), we witnessed activities along the roadside. We observed that it was mainly women and young children working on the land, and they waved at us happily as we drove by. About five kilometres outside a village called Moshupa, we stopped by a field where we saw a mother carrying a baby on her back, with two other girls of around five years of age walking by her side, and their granny behind them. The two elders were carrying hoes. When we asked where they were headed, they indicated that they were going to the masimo, the local word for “field.” We wanted to know why the young men and women, as well as the husbands were not with them to assist with the tasks, and so, we engaged the elders in a discussion:
“Where is your husband and the young men and women who should be assisting you with work in the field?”

“They are away in town...in Gaborone, also South Africa...to earn some money,” answered one of the two ladies.

My friend then asked, “Do they send you money for food?”

“Sometimes they do...but they also complain that money is not enough for them in town. So we do not get much from them,” answered the older woman.

I then asked, “So what do you do for food?”

“Food...food is a big problem, that is why you see us getting up early and go to the lands. If we do not do that, these little children will die...mmmm...” answered the older woman.

My friend asked the younger woman, “So...who owns the land you are working on?”

“It’s for my late husband...but you know that our law does not allow women to own land. It was a bigger piece, but when my son inherited the land, he sold part of it and finished all the money buying himself beer...” The younger lady shook her head as she said this.

We drove on and joined the Trans Kalahari Highway, passing by farmlands where cropping was in progress. After passing Jwaneng Mine, some kilometres outside a village settlement called Kang, we stopped by a homestead where women were sitting outside a hut. We asked for some water and their response was that there was not a drop because they had not yet gone to fetch water from a bush pump some six kilometres away.

My friend then asked, “So you get water from such a distance everyday? Who helps you?”

“Nobody. As a woman I have learnt to do it because men are not supposed to carry water on their head except when they use a donkey cart. Young boys and girls are away in town,” answered one woman.

“How about food? Do you have enough?” I asked.

“No...no...it’s never enough here. Most young men and women, and our husbands go to town where there are city lights. Some do not come back. They only come when they are sick or when they come to leave their children,” one of the women retorted.

My friend asked, “What do you mean?”
The woman then responded, “You see that hut there? There lies my sick daughter who has these three children you see. She has a strange illness and health people have said we must be careful when we wash her. She needs food. Her children need food. We all need food. We get a bit of milk from the goats, but that too is not enough. I have to make sure I work in the fields so that I can feed them.”

“So how do you manage to feed the children?” My friend asked.

“It’s all by the grace of God. I don’t know how I am managing. Mind you my other child, a son, died of the same disease, which my daughter is suffering from. We are told they must eat good food when suffering from that disease...but where do I get good food from? The few chickens I had are all finished. Those are the only ones I could call mine. The goats belong to men, just like the cattle,” the woman replied.

My friends and I gave the lady who was talking to us more than the others, 50 Pula (P50). Pula is the name of the currency used in Botswana, and is equivalent to five US dollars ($5). The manner in which she expressed her gratitude cannot be expressed in words. She was forever thankful, and she wished us long life and blessings from ancestors.
Our final destination, before returning to Gaborone, was D’kar, a settlement for Remote Area Dwellers (RAD). These have often been erroneously referred to as Bushmen, but the correct name for them is Basarwa or the San. Since the sun was setting, we decided to put up in a small cattle-farming town called Ghanzi.

The following morning, we set out to our destination. After a two hour drive, we arrived at D’kar, in the middle of the Kalahari Desert. After a brief visit at the primary school, built by the government of Botswana for the Basarwa children, we walked around to mingle with the San Community. Around them are cattle farms, where many of the San men work for cattle barons.

Our guide told us that hunting and gathering was still a way of life for the San, and although there was a school built for them, attendance was erratic. This is simply because school is a totally different way of life. The men would work for cattle farmers in an equally erratic manner, and while they were thus occupied, the women went about gathering food for the families. Although we experienced language problems, we were left in no doubt about the role of women in seeking food for the families while men went hunting. The government of Botswana previously introduced a scheme where those Basarwa who accepted being resettled were given some goats as seed to start their own flock. They were also given small plots to grow some crops. Both the tending of goats, and the growing of small crops, fell mostly on the shoulders of women even though they had little knowledge of agriculture.

When you travel from Gaborone to the second biggest city called Francistown, you follow the N1 route, on which, barely five kilometres from the city centre, to your left, you see the Botswana College of Agriculture. There are impressive buildings to your immediate right as well. You cannot miss it.
After returning from our journey into the countryside, we decided to pay a visit to this college to ask a few questions about the state of agricultural training in the country. We specifically wanted to know: were there any policies governing women’s participation in agriculture? What were the actual numbers of women trained at the college on an annual basis? What was the extent to which rural women were being given refresher courses to enable them to play a more meaningful role in food production and growth? The bit of information we got showed that the proportion of trained women in the field of agriculture is lower than that of men. Also due to the remoteness of many parts of the country, it was not easy for extension officers to reach such places on a regular basis to give women much needed assistance. We were also informed that one major factor that interfered with the desire to do farming — both crop and animal husbandry — was the drought phenomenon. It was indicated that Botswana is a dry country, and efforts to do any meaningful farming were often frustrated by the natural conditions.

Following this tour across the country, and the visit to the College of Agriculture, we sought to establish what literature has to say about the role played by women. One of the recent sources we consulted is *Gender and Agriculture*, prepared by the Botswana Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Agricultural Planning and Statistics.

In Botswana, agriculture is largely a rural enterprise, and given the cases cited, it is logical to find ways of improving the lot of women in rural areas. Perrett (1996) has suggested five issues concerning targeting rural women. This makes sense, because a very high percentage of rural households are headed by women, and women are also more likely to retain some initiative and an entrepreneurial spirit. Apart from policy formulation at the statutory level, there is need to strategise. The five issues discussed below are worth taking into consideration.

**i. The Mobility Issue in Targeting Women**

The ethnic minorities, such as the Basarwa, continue to be quite mobile, in spite of being nominally "settled" in RAD settlements. A major push factor in their mobility is the search for food and, to a lesser extent, income. Seasonal mobility is not just a matter of the adult male migrating to look for work. Sometimes entire families, or a part of a family, move further into the bush or to cattle posts to search for veld products or wildlife, or to get away from conflict in the settlements.

**ii. The Organisational Issue in Targeting Women**

It would be hard to find women’s groups or organisations in RAD settlements; they are more prevalent in villages. Overall, the study found widespread conflicts and ethnic and other divisions in the majority of RAD settlements and in the villages. The *Kgotla* meeting (Kgotla is the traditional place where court cases are tried), which traditionally was the means for community discussion, problem solving and decision-making, has been co-opted by outsiders and is dominated by the local elite. The Basarwa now consider the meeting foreign and too fast paced, and retreat from participation in it. The language question is
also a major hindrance because those who purport to teach the Basarwa are not able to speak the language and vice versa.

iii. The Workload Issue in Targeting Women
Women in Botswana, as is common, tend to have more constraints on their time than do men, particularly in RAD settlements. A considerable part of their day is taken up with the collection of veld products to feed their families, and of water (where cattle owners have captured the settlement’s water supply). Women, more frequently than men, also perform the manual labour required in drought relief programmes.

iv. Skill and Knowledge Constraints in Targeting Women
Women suffer from a lack of literacy and a lack of understanding of the cash economy and cash management. Overall, only 55% of the heads of households in rural Botswana have some education. The percentage is lower among female heads and ethnic minorities such as the Basarwa. Such lack of education and skills will hamper women in setting up their own small businesses, or performing wage employment. Among the very marginalised RAD populations, lack of money management skills is aggravated by the fear of witchcraft that is associated with individual achievement and with ownership of cash.

v. Natural Constraint
Botswana has vast stretches of land, which fall within the Kalahari Desert. The places are dry, and have little rainfall, which makes agricultural production considerably difficult. Women tend to show a passion for crop production, for that is their only hope in the absence of any other source for food. The sad thing is that there is very little they can do as the sun scorches their crops, and in the absence of drinking water, goats and cattle perish as they watch helplessly.

Conclusion
It is clear from the cases, as well as from the literature that, in Botswana, and probably in other countries in Southern Africa, the gender issue in agriculture is critical. It is apparent that women tend to be entrapped in the poverty condition on account of a number of factors, including social attitudes, culture, remoteness from areas of development, and lack of clear policies by the central government on gender mainstreaming when it comes to agriculture. Where such policies exist, excellent as they might be, communication can be hampered by poor financial resources allocated by the government to reach RAD. The issue of Basarwa remains considerably critical for a variety of reasons. The foremost of these is acculturating the women into formalised agriculture when they have a background of seasonal migration. In the final analysis, one can observe that the nations should recognize the important role of women in agriculture at both echelons — the schooled women, and rural women who play a leadership role in fending for families.
**Discussion Questions**

1. What are the impediments to women’s active participation in agriculture as shown in this case?
2. What government policies can be promulgated to enhance women’s participation in agriculture?
3. In what ways do you think the situation of Remote Area Dwellers is different from that of women normally found in the rural areas of Botswana?
4. What would be the benefits of education in changing entrenched gender attitudes in the country?

**References**


**Further Reading**


Women in Management: The Case of Botswana

Professor Stanslaus Modesto (DLitt et Phil)
Gaborone University College of Law and Professional Studies
Abstract

The study aims to share information on the employability of women in management in Botswana. It was motivated by the lack of commonly available information about the ratio of women to men in decision-making positions. Three questions guided the investigation, which was conducted over a period of four weeks:

a) What is the proportion of women to men in management positions?
b) From general observation, it seems that there are fewer women in decision-making positions than men. Why is this the case?
c) What policies are in existence to rationalise the allocation of management positions?

To respond to the questions, data were collected using document analysis and questionnaires administered to officers, purposively sampled from four main players: the public sector, parastatals, the private sector, and organised groups (e.g. trade unions and non-governmental organisations). Essentialist and social construction theories guided data collection. Analysis of data involved interpretation of statistics and views solicited from participants. Two key findings were that a) the proportion of men in decision-making positions remains higher after almost 50 years of independence, and b) there is a conscious effort at the statutory level to ensure the inclusion of more women. Based on the findings, the study recommends that, apart from putting in place policies that are conducive to the elevation of women, there should be a more conscious effort to expose more women to open and distance learning higher education programmes that will make them more competitive.

Key Words: decision-making positions, management, empowerment, gender mainstreaming

Introduction

Grant Thornton International Ltd. (2012) observes that, in Botswana, 39% of senior management roles are held by women — a 7% increase from last year’s 32%. This signifies a lower percentage compared to that of men, and this means there is room for improvement in terms of the number of female leaders in the country’s corporate organisations. While drawing a comparison with other countries, Grant Thornton has observed that Botswana, Brazil and Japan perform worse on the measure used (all 3%), when compared with the United Kingdom and the United States (both 6%), countries that are not far ahead. Australia topped the table, with the highest proportion of females in top management positions. It is against this perceived problem — that of a lower percentage of women CEOs and other higher positions in Botswana — that this investigation was conducted, to inter alia establish reasons for the low percentage, and confirm the type of policies that are in place to enhance opportunities for women’s elevation.
Background to the Study

In Botswana, ascent to the positions of power is constitutionally guaranteed to all individual citizens regardless of their race, ethnic group, religion, gender, or any background that can define a person, as long as the considered candidate is fulfilling the requirements. Even though women have the same civil rights as men in Botswana on a legal level, in practice, political and societal prejudice is observed to be persistent.

However, Botswana is one of the countries that have been ratified to the international and regional gender declarations. These are the Beijing Declaration-Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) declaration on gender and development. These declarations address human rights and components of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Statement of the Problem

The study investigates the lack of commonly available information about the ratio of women to men in decision-making positions. Related to the problem are questions regarding reasons for the perceived low ratio of women vis-à-vis that of men, as well as whether there are policies in place to address the issue of equality. Action research is conducted to address the perceived problem so that there is a basic common understanding of this important feature of Botswana. Three questions guided the investigation conducted over a period of four weeks:

a) What is the proportion of women to men in decision-making positions?

b) From general observation, it seems there are fewer women in decision-making positions than men. Why is this the case?

c) What policies are in existence to rationalise the distribution of management positions?

Aims of the Study

Although views on gender have been published in daily newspapers, and expressed variously at conferences, there remains a gap in providing information to the general public about gendered demographics in equality in decision-making positions. Knowledge about any discrepancies about representation by either gender (the “what” aspect), and why the situation stands as such (the “why” aspect) should be common. Equally importantly, the literate and the professionals should be familiar with policies, if any, that are in place to enhance women’s advancement (the “how” aspect).
Thus, the study aims to empirically investigate the Botswana situation and shed light on:

- what the gender proportion is,
- why the gender proportion is the way it is,
- how the government motivates women’s advancement.

**Methodology**

The critical methodology and the research design used, as well as the paradigm, the methods, and sampling procedures are explained in some detail in this section.

**Research Design**

The research is conducted in accordance with the case study design, best defined by Yin (1984) as:

> …an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. (p. 23)

The locus of the study is the real-life situations of promoting women to higher positions in Botswana, and thus, the understanding of the situation on the ground has been identified as the problem. In that regard, the case examines a single example (the Botswana scenario) in order to provide reliable information about the broader issue: the phenomenon of the elevation of women. As Flyvbjerg (2006) observes, the case study is a scientific research design, which produces context-dependent knowledge. By capturing views expressed by officers, we get authentic knowledge about Botswana’s situation.

**Methods**

To collect data about the ratio of women to men who are in positions of decision-making, and reasons why there are more men than women, documents from the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) were analysed. Statistics from different national players were analysed and commented upon. In this regard, statistics constituted quantitative data documented as close-ended information.

In contrast, office bearers who were requested to respond to a questionnaire, gave open-ended information in which participants responded in their own words. This method specifically solicited information that answered the question: Why are there fewer women in decision-making positions than men? The analysis of these qualitative data (words or text) typically follows the path of aggregating such words into categories of information and presenting the diversity of ideas gathered during data collection.

By mixing the datasets (quantitative and qualitative), a better understanding of the problem is provided than if either dataset had been used alone.
Sampling
Botswana recognizes the responsibility attached to offices by salary grades. The top-most salary bracket for CEOs in the Public Service is marked as F0, while that of deputies is noted as F1. Other decision-making salary scales are E1, E2, and D1. The sample comprised of five organisations from which officers in F1 and E1 scales were selected to respond to questionnaires. CEOs were excluded mainly because they are too busy to be in a position to attend to details such as answering questionnaires. The table shows the study sample:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Female Number in F1</th>
<th>Male Number in E2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. A Parastatal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. A Public Sector Institution</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. A Private Sector Organisation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. A Trade Union</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. An NGO</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Study sample

The sole purpose of the sample was to get representative views from the five acknowledged players. There are many in each category nationwide, and it was difficult to contact all. Judgment was exercised in terms of vicinity (thus cutting down on cost), and accessibility. Purposive sampling was, therefore, preferred regarding participants. On the other hand, selection of documents for analysis depended on their availability, so convenience sampling was used.

Ethical Considerations
Assurance was given that the study was not a profit-making activity, and at the same time participants had the right to decline to participate. Finally, one benefit promised was that once the case study had been accepted by the COL’s Executive Governing Board for the aforementioned two programmes, participants would receive a copy.

Findings
For ease of analysis, the findings are presented question-by-question.
1. What is the proportion of women to men in decision-making positions, nationwide?

Data, which were captured to respond to this question, came from documents conveniently sampled from various sources. The UNICEF (2011) Annual Report observes that despite being an upper middle-income country, Botswana continues to face development challenges such as persistent poverty and inequality among men and women (p. 6). Although there is evidence that there is progress in women’s participation in managerial positions and positions of leadership, women’s representation in political office in Botswana is well below the SADC target of 30%. The percentage of women in Parliament dropped to 7% in 2009, from 11% in 2004 (UNICEF, 2011). These statistics on political representation are representative, and are echoed in the composite percentage by Grant Thornton International (2012) who note that in Botswana, 39% of senior management roles are held by women — this is a 7% increase from the previous year’s 32%. Obviously, this shows some improvement, but the percentage is, nevertheless, low, taking into consideration statistics provided by Thornton International. According to their findings in terms of the number of female CEOs in the country, Botswana, Brazil and Japan perform worst on this measure (all 3%), with the United Kingdom and the United States (both 6%) not far ahead. Australia topped the table with the highest proportion of female CEOs — women lead three in ten businesses in Australia.

The Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (2008), from which subsequent information is sourced, gives further statistics on the subject. In Table 2, data about decision-makers in the civil service are shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>173 (41%)</td>
<td>250 (59%)</td>
<td>423 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>88 (40%)</td>
<td>133 (60%)</td>
<td>221 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>27 (28%)</td>
<td>61 (69%)</td>
<td>88 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>19 (28%)</td>
<td>56 (72%)</td>
<td>78 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>11 (31%)</td>
<td>25 (69%)</td>
<td>36 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F0</td>
<td>5 (18%)</td>
<td>23 (82%)</td>
<td>28 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>874 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Civil service decision-makers


Table 2 indicates that those in the top salary scales associated with leadership positions account for 37% women and 63% men. It is, therefore, overtly clear that men are more
privileged. The next table (Table 3), from the Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (2008) sheds light on statistics from individual ministries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State President</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Development Planning</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and Industry</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works and Transport</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minerals Energy and Resource</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lands and Housing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications Science and Technology</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Wildlife and Tourism</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Sports and Culture</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour and Home Affairs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Distribution of decision-making positions by sex per ministry


The lowest percentage (6%) is recorded in the Ministry of Works and Transport, followed by the Ministries of Minerals and Energy (17%), Agriculture (26%), Foreign Affairs (32%), Trade and Industry (32%), and quite surprisingly, Health (33%). The Health Ministry is normally dominated by female nurses. The Ministry of Communication Science and Technology recorded an impressive appointment of women into the positions of decision-making with 58%. It is followed by the Ministries of Local Government, Finance and Development Planning, and Youth Sports and Culture with 51%, 51% and 50% respectively.
Parastatals such as the Bank of Botswana, Botswana Technology Centre, Botswana Meat Commission, and Botswana Telecommunications Authority (BTA) have a clear inclination towards more men decision-makers. The BTA has the low percentage of 13%.

Finally, the private sector tells a similar story, with the distribution of top positions in favour of men. A Clay-works company indicates that 23% of the decision-makers of this company are women while the rest are men. The other companies are: a car battery manufacturing company (17%); a motor car fuel company (14%); a private primary school (71%); and an insurance company (10%). All companies favour men, and the only variation is the private school.

This section has answered the question about representation in the different sectors. The conclusion is that, with few exceptions, the inclination of most organisations is towards more male decision-makers. The reasons for this inclination are addressed as we answer the next question.

2. From general observation, it would appear there are fewer women in decision-making positions than men. Why is this the case?

Researching within a cultural background that is known to have a bias towards men, it is inevitable that the exploration of this question is accompanied by some pre-conceived explanations. However, in a more empirical bid, it is essential to base conclusions on views by insiders (position holders). A total of 20 decision-makers from five players, sampled from the national pool (see section on methodology) responded to questionnaires. The interpretation of findings will be influenced by the theories of essentialism and social construction.

Essentialism argues that the differences between men and women are due to biological determinates. On the other hand, social constructionism argues that the issue of underrepresentation of women in management positions is best explained by societal rather than biological forces.

In response to the question, two things that made the respondents qualify for the post they hold were a) the right qualification, and b) relevant experience. The exception came from two male respondents, who had higher than the qualification required. They observed that today, more than minimum qualifications should be considered.

Only five women affirmed that holding the right qualifications should be considered when women compete for the same post with men. Eight of ten male participants concur that possession of the right qualification should be upheld. All who responded to the question in the affirmative, agree to this on the basis of two variables, and these are:

1) without the relevant qualification, one cannot lead successfully; and  
2) having the right qualification means possession of requisite skills.

The women who said “no” to the need to hold the relevant qualification offered two reasons as follows:
3) In Botswana, men have more privilege to go to school, so if a woman has a diploma she should be promoted when competing against a man who holds a degree.
4) A woman without a degree, but with a good basic qualification plus experience should be elevated.

From this, it can be concluded that the issue of education, a social construction element, has some impact on the elevation of women.

The next question was: What challenges do women leaders face when in positions of decision-making, which their male counterparts do not face? Two points arose from the ten women respondents:

5) Natural ailments, which women experience every month resulting in missing out days at work.
6) There are responsibilities of a mother at home, which take time and energy.

The majority of men, seven of ten, in fact, raised similar points. These commonly shared responses illustrate that biological considerations are actively at play, and negatively impact the preferment of women in Botswana. In response to the questions, some male respondents make additions as follows:

7) When women are visited by natural ailments, they become moody and this makes the workplace atmosphere unpleasant.
8) Women think men are challenging their authority even when they are asking constructive questions. They think men despise them for being women.

It is concluded from the responses that deciding to offer a woman a decision-making position has a psychological dimension that has to do with the way women are perceived as leaders. Some stereotyping comes to the fore. However, it is difficult to note with certainty that women leaders would be moody and have a negative attitude towards their male subordinates.

As to whether there are any other criteria used to elevate women, the majority of both men and women concurred that promotion was influenced by four aspects of a social nature, namely, political affiliation, bribery, favouritism and nepotism. Women respondents explained that these four usually favour men applicants for a post. The responses confirm social construction theory, which shows that there are factors other than biological determinates accounting for the low percentage of women in positions of responsibility.

The final question, a follow-up to the previous one, requested respondents to specify whether there are any attitudinal problems militating against the promotion of women. The following responses from women add a new dimension to the discussion:
a) Botswana society looks down upon women.
b) Because men are physically stronger, they think they are more intelligent than women.
c) Men think that women are there to satisfy their sexual desire, and they cannot separate this when thinking about promoting women.
d) Most interview panels have a large percentage of men who are biased against women.

The conclusions, which can be drawn from these responses, are that the elevation of women is mired in cultural and societal misconceptions as shown in (a). Similarly, (b) is another misconception with a biological explanation. On the other hand, (c), which has sexual connotations, is considered influential when deciding to elevate women. Finally, (d) is an eye-opener for something normally taken for granted, that is, the composition of interview panelists in different organisations. It is logical to conclude that if the majority of men constitute the interview panel, the foregoing attitudes, which men are said to have towards women, can actually work in favour of male interviewees.

This section has shown that there is a myriad of cultural, physical and social barriers, which prevent women from reaching the top jobs. With rapid urbanisation and new ways of handling development, Botswana may still be grappling with how to deal with the issue of promotion for women.

3. What policies are in place to rationalise the allocation of positions?

Within a given country, and for any developmental agenda, policies are a critical component of governance. In the case of the present study, they enhance gender mainstreaming. To answer the question on policies, data were obtained from two sources, namely, document analysis and responses to the questionnaire.

The Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (2008) gives a fairly comprehensive coverage of a wide range of gender related matters, including policies. It is observed that Botswana is one of the countries that have been ratified to the international and regional gender declarations. These are the Beijing Declaration-Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), MDGs, ICPD, and SADC declaration on gender and development. These declarations address human rights, and components of gender equality and empowerment of women. All the countries that ratified these declarations are expected to conform to the commitment and report on the progress and status of gender equality and women in their respective countries. The areas of focus for Botswana included reporting on the status of women in power and decision-making positions.

Parliament in 1996 with the understanding that all Botswana and their organisations would own and implement it.

Botswana acceded to the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1996. Botswana has also acceded to the Optional Protocol on the CEDAW. The Optional Protocol is a monitoring and evaluation instrument for the CEDAW.

In the questionnaire, a question was asked requiring respondents to state whether they were aware of any gender policies in Botswana, and explain any aspect of a given policy. Out of ten women, five expressed awareness of the existence of policies, but none could name a policy nor give an explanation. It can be observed that it is in the interest of women to have a functional knowledge of what is available by way of statutes and policies. Otherwise, ignorance of these cannot help their cause for elevation. Thus, it can be concluded that there is need to mount a campaign aimed at informing women about the policies.

**Discussion**

The problem which was stated as the lack of commonly available information about the ratio of women to men in decision-making positions was the primary motivation for the present study. The three questions which guided the study led to data collection and analysis, as reflected in the findings presented in the previous section. In the present section, focus shifts to the discussion of the conclusions already drawn, implications of the study, the contribution of the study, and recommendations formulated before proposing future research.

Statistics indicated that although Botswana seems to be doing reasonably well regarding furtherance of the cause for women in leadership, the situation is in favour of men. Several government ministries have a low showing, with the Ministry of Works and Transport having as low as 6% women. On the other hand, some ministries have high percentages, for example, 58% for the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology. This implies inconsistency in the distribution of leadership positions across organisations. It is recommended that inter-ministerial dialogue be promoted so that ministries benefit from each other’s strengths and weaknesses. Regarding the low percentages in private companies, it is advisable that they learn from public service organisations, which seem to be ahead in terms of awareness and implementation of national expectations. Were that to happen, many companies, which are branches of mainly South African companies, would be well advised to consider empowering local women.

In the data analysis, responses showed that lower education on the part of women tends to prejudice their opportunities for elevation. Education, therefore, seems to be key, yet accessibility for women is considered limited. Conscious steps should be taken by the government to create opportunities for access to higher education for women.
The one alternative available to women is open and distance learning (ODL). Vacancies at conventional institutions are limited, while the ODL route has the advantage of helping women enhance their qualifications without leaving employment and losing earnings. More importantly, they will not move away from their families and social responsibilities, and they can study and apply newly acquired skills in the job environment where they are likely to seek promotion in the future.

In responding to questions about the imbalance in terms of representation, a majority of the women respondents opined that bribery, nepotism, political affiliation, and favouritism for men applicants also accounts for the exclusion of women. This implies that the four elements alluded to are a reality in the debate, a revelation not much discussed in Botswana. If this were to be given the benefit of the doubt that it is men who are guilty of perpetuating this malpractice, it is recommended that the government of Botswana should take the necessary steps to ensure fair play when posts are competed for.

In response to the prevalence of attitudes, women respondents overwhelmingly noted that Botswana society looks down upon them, something which they say is also reflected in the male dominated panels of interviewers. What is not new about this is the well acknowledged understanding that Botswana society, in general, holds this unacceptable attitude towards women. However, what is new is the allusion that interview panels tend to be dominated by men. This implies that something can be done. In view of this, it is recommended that key stakeholders come up with a think-tank on how to systematically work on social attitudes towards women in the professions, in general, and women in decision-making positions in particular. Such an initiative would go beyond mere rhetoric, given that much discussion has been evident, but that it has not led to much-needed action.

The findings showed that some women are not aware of policies already in place aimed at safeguarding their rights. However, more importantly, research findings have exposed the view that women are biased against themselves, and that they believe that they are less competitive than men. As already observed, availing educational opportunities ought to be explored. Notwithstanding that, and regarding the point of women prejudicing themselves, a different type of education is recommended. The psychological mindset of ambiguity and lack of confidence in the self, would require systematic attention for purposes of disambiguation. Concerted effort, through seminars and workshops, ought to be applied to ensure progress in self-discovery and self-worth in women.
Conclusion

Empowerment of women by having them occupy positions of decision-making is an acknowledged area of national concern. While it is true that governments across the world have put in place policies to regulate women preferment for positions, research has shown that the equation is still in favour of men. The current study has confirmed this, and deliberated on the reasons for such a state of affairs. Some of the reasons are attributable to biological determinates, while the majority can be attributed to social misconceptions about women. The overarching aim of the study has been to avail information from which women and men benefit equally, so that inequality is not perpetuated.

Discussion Questions

1. How can gender sensitive government policies be better implemented in your country?
2. What other changes to government policies can you suggest?
3. How does the situation in the present case study compare with that of any other country of your choice?
4. Is the empowerment of women, in any way, a lowering of standards in situations where men have always dominated?
5. How does the question of attitudes towards women in management have an impact on the promotion of women in your country?
6. If there are more, and better educated, men than women (for top positions) in your country, what strategies do you recommend to address the imbalance?
7. When you look at statistics in Tables 2 and 3, Botswana seems to be doing better than the countries listed in terms of women representation. Why, do you think, this is?

References


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**Further Reading**


Workplace Discrimination: Jamaican Case

Dr. Margarett Barnett
University of the Commonwealth Caribbean
Abstract

This case reviews the increasingly expanding literature on gender discrimination in management, focusing on women in decision-making positions in a private sector organisation in Jamaica; this is not to say that the same may not be obtained in the public sphere. There have been various forms of psychological mechanisms, ranging from stereotyping, to attribution or equity, which have presented barriers to the advancement of women in managerial positions. These mechanisms are not necessarily mutually exclusive but rather complementary, the manifestations of which come in the form of discrimination against females, ranging from formal to informal, and covert to overt. Gillian Morgan was aspiring to be on the top rung of the corporate ladder in Genesis Financial Services but her professional vision became blurred by the actions of Courtney Beckford, Vice President of Operations at Genesis Financial Services.

A phenomenological study was carried out in 2016 at Genesis Financial Services located in the Metropolis of Jamaica, where Gillian Morgan detailed her experiences as a bright articulate woman working at Genesis Financial Services and one who had her hopes for moving beyond middle manager level within the company dashed; this led to her eventual voluntary separation from the company.

Introduction

Gender discrimination in the workplace can take the form of either “disparate treatment,” when individuals are intentionally treated differently based on their gender, or of “disparate impact,” when the members of a certain group are negatively affected by the decision-making procedures or the existing work practices (Cleveland, Vescio and Barnes-Farrell, 2005, p. 150-151). Depending on the degree of visibility, another distinction can be made between formal/overt discrimination and informal/covert discrimination, the manifestations of which are less explicit, or masked as other types of behaviours (e.g. paternalistic behaviour, humour and language used to conceal male domination over women) (Cleveland, Vescio & Barnes-Farrell, 2005, p. 150-155).

In light of the International Labour Organisation’s 2015 Report, one could argue that the whole idea of gender discrimination in Jamaica is mystical and so one need not pay special attention to it, as the problems associated with gender discrimination have already been solved. This may not be altogether true and, hence, efforts must continue to highlight the instances and areas where gender discrimination exists, because the negative aspects of gender discrimination still affect employees and managers around the globe.

Objective of the Study

This case is documented in response to Commonwealth of Learning’s request for gender-based cases in its member countries. Specifically, the objectives of the case study are to:
• provide information on gender discrimination issues in the Jamaican workplace;
• give opportunities for students to suggest the content of an organisation’s gender equality policy;
• sensitize students to the negative effects of gender discrimination.

**Method of Data Collection**

This type of research lends itself to a Descriptive Qualitative (Ethnography/Case Study) methodology. Detailed descriptions of the specific situation(s) leading to an alleged case of gender discrimination were gathered using interviews and document reviews. The subject matter described things as they were. Careful note was made of the challenges faced in ascending the ranks in the organisation. The subject became impatient with the anachronistic system of managing talent, and took steps to leave the organisation. These actions, among others, have led the organisation on a path of renewal.

**Section 1**

Gillian Morgan is a 35-year old, very accomplished, female, a certified Project Manager working in a well-established financial institution in Jamaica. She landed the job five years ago and has made her mark as a bright and very ambitious young woman.

Genesis Financial Services has been operating in Jamaica for over 150 years under the leadership of distinguished male Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and a cadre of bright and “not-so-bright” males, who, it is felt by some, are placed in senior positions as a “rite of passage” on the basis of tenure.

Courtney Beckford started with the company 20 years ago, and has risen steadily through the ranks. He now holds the very powerful position of Vice President, Operations. Courtney spent his years at Genesis wheeling and dealing, and has created power bases in the organisation. No one dared to cross his path. In essence, he has only “yes men” and “yes women” around him.

**Section 2**

The bright and ambitious Gillian Morgan was promoted to a position that reported directly to Courtney. Gillian was already catching the attention of many in the organisation as she was bright and articulate, and was considered “one for the future.” She was going places. The CEO, Garth Miller, who had been at Genesis for only a year, was one of those who saw Gillian’s worth and would communicate with her directly. Consequently, he commissioned her to work on a special project. Gillian, in handing over the project, made a brilliant presentation to the Executive Management group, in which Courtney was present.

After that meeting, Gillian was summoned to a meeting by Courtney and severely reprimanded for presenting to the Executive Management without his explicit knowledge. Courtney also reminded Gillian that he is her supervisor and he ought to know everything she is working on regardless of who instructed her and, more importantly, that she should not be communicating with the CEO directly.
As time passed, Gillian recognized a strain in her working relationship with Courtney, who by then, was undermining her authority as Project Manager by offloading important projects she was working on to junior staff members.

Gillian asked for a meeting with Courtney and enquired about the reasons for her diminished role in the organization, and made the statement that what was happening was stifling her career. His response was: “A girl like you should be able to get any job, and if you have options, you should exercise them.” He made a sly remark that she comes with a very high price, meaning that her salary, in his estimation, is already too high. Gillian did not like how that made her feel and she started to look for opportunities outside his department.

**Section 3**

An opportunity presented itself a month later when the company posted a listing for Vice President, Strategy. The company encouraged current employees to apply. According to the job description, eligible applicants should have at least five years of prior experience with the company and should hold a graduate degree in either business or finance. Furthermore, each applicant would be required to make an oral presentation.

Gillian went to her boss and advised him that she was interested in the position, and he encouraged her to apply. Although Gillian applied and completed an exceptional presentation and interview, the panel, which included Courtney Beckford, awarded the position to John Fuller, an external applicant. His qualification paled in comparison to Gillian’s and he lacked the requisite experience to fill such a position. Gillian could not help thinking that she was being punished by Courtney.

**Section 4**

Gillian suffered further humiliation at Genesis Financial Services when Courtney transferred her to another department to work under the direct supervision of John Fuller, the new VP of Strategy. Gillian was devastated. This was too much for her; she began reducing her efforts on the job and planning her exit. To make matters worse, John confessed to Gillian that he was out of his depth and was relying on her to help him through.

As John built a professional relationship with Gillian, he disclosed that Courtney had instructed him to ensure that she, Gillian, speak to the CEO through him, that is, John. Gillian found that absurd and flatly told him that she had never sought audience with the CEO. On the contrary, it was the CEO who would seek to engage her in conversation. She quipped, “When he starts a conversation, I will tell him I can’t speak to him because you said I should only speak to him through you.” John quickly realized the absurdity of the situation and recanted.

Gillian was now convinced that any ambitions she harboured of “climbing the corporate ladder” would not be realized at Genesis Financial Services. When she surveyed the company, the top positions were occupied by males, some of which were not qualified for
their jobs. Gillian had worked with a multinational corporation prior to coming to Genesis, which had policies that spoke to equal employment opportunities. This was opposed to indigenous companies like Genesis which have no developed employment policies through which aggrieved persons like Gillian could appeal and expect redress.

Gillian was adamant that her vision for her career would not be thwarted, so she began in earnest to seek employment elsewhere. Everyone at Genesis noticed how withdrawn and disinterested she had become and wondered what could have caused this. Gillian still maintained contact with Garth Miller, the CEO, but at no time did she discuss how she felt about her perception of unfair employment practices.

**Section 5**

Two months into her job search Gillian received two job offers from companies considered to be “blue chip.” One was in the financial industry and the other in the manufacturing industry. As soon as she had negotiated and signed the contract with the new company, she resigned from her position with Genesis Financial Services. Surprisingly, it came as a shock to Senior Executives, except Courtney, who quipped: “She is a survivor.”

The Senior Human Resources Management Director, who was very surprised and disturbed by the sudden loss of a “valuable talent” to the organisation, asked Gillian for an exit interview. Garth, the CEO, was bewildered as, in his own words, he had Gillian on a trajectory to assume a more strategic role in the organisation and he could not imagine what could have caused the resignation. He too wanted an exit interview. Garth took Gillian’s resignation personally as she was the third female with excellent talent that had resigned since he took up the position of CEO of Genesis Financial Services.

The exit interview with Garth Miller was very instructive. He was mortified at the tremendous power that Courtney Beckford wielded and the apparent part he had played in the departure from the organisation of some excellent talent. Garth believed that he had built a sound relationship with Gillian and expected that she would have made him aware of the unfair workplace practices which led to her resignation. Gillian was not perturbed by his utterances, as she was convinced that he was being superfluous and must have known what was happening “on the ground.” Garth asked her to rethink her exit, as she had a great future at Genesis.

The meeting with Janet Crawford, the Senior HR Director, was in Gillian’s words, “patronizing.” She thought Gillian was making “much ado about nothing.” She suffered the same fate at the hands of Courtney Beckford, but she knew just how to get around him. Janet indicated that she saw the waning of Gillian’s energies and thought that she was taking the actions of the VP Operations too personally. She should have just continued doing her best. Gillian found her comments unhelpful and questioned her commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where all can flourish.

Garth Miller questioned his leadership, and wondered aloud about the reasons for the untimely departure of three very talented staff in quick succession. He asked Gillian
pointedly to withdraw her resignation, and help to draft policies and procedures for Genesis.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How much should companies be willing to do to correct gender inequalities?
2. Is the CEO, Garth Miller, believable, and should Gillian reconsider her decision to exit and instead, stay to help be a part of the change?
3. Are the facts as presented in the case sufficient to indicate that Genesis Financial Services discriminated against Gillian Morgan?
4. What kind of redress, if any, is available to Gillian Morgan in the Civil Court? Who should be the defendant in the matter?

**Reference**

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COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING (COL)
4710 Kingsway, Suite 2500
Burnaby, BC V5H 4M2 Canada
Phone +1 604 775 8200 / Fax +1 604 775 8210
info@col.org
www.col.org
@col4d
facebook.com/COL4D/
instagram.com/commonwealthoflearning/