

## Communication

# Utilization of Surplus Rural Labour in Developing Economies- A Model

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### The Basic Model

The socio-economic model presented in this paper concerns utilization of surplus labour (the disguised unemployment phenomenon) in rural communities in developing economies. The economics in the model are very simple - a couple of wrinkles, but still very simple, largely taken from Errington (2007). The social considerations are less so.

It is assumed that the families supporting the disguised unemployed want to be able to use this labour, which at present has zero or near zero opportunity cost, to leapfrog through time to a significantly better way of life. (Think of villages in India, which are aware of economic growth in which they are not sharing.) Moreover, these families are aware of the dangers of causing envy and resentment among the people in their vicinity who do not have such supported labour as a resource.

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The course of action taken by our collection of families is to induce a business to partner with them in establishing a particular kind of enterprise. The labour, the individual families, have shares in the enterprise, along with the business. This in lieu of wages. The enterprise is modestly sized to start with, but because of product/technology choice, scales upward without great difficulty according to an agreed-on investment schedule. The investment is done by the village families from most of the income from their shares, with the individual families acquiring an increasing proportion of the shares as the result.

Basically, what is happening here is that the villagers are investing their surplus labour in their own job creation. Of particular interest from a national standpoint, the aforementioned situation where villagers feel they are not sharing in economic improvement. Consider, for example, Indian national elections in recent years. Of particular interest from a regional standpoint, a region where substantial industrialization is taking place fairly nearby very densely populated rural areas (South Karnataka/Kerala?)

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### Inducing the Business Investment

Table 1 shows the operation of the model for a seven year period. The purpose is to show in a general way how the workers could offer a business investor a low risk investment opportunity with a very attractive upside.

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Since Table I is a spreadsheet application, the spreadsheet formulas used are contained in Table 2. Risk is lowered for the business investor because of the three assumptions underlying the model. First, his initial capital investment, the only capital investment he will have to make, is heavily leveraged by the labour inputs (e.g. multiple shifts). Second, the point of profitability is reached much sooner, because a large cost, wages, is eliminated for the seven year period shown. The consequence of the shift from wages to profit shares is, of course, the dilution of the profits, but regarding this, see the third assumption. Third, the business investor will continue to receive additional profit shares, which grow in proportion to labour's investment, although he himself will not be investing further. (The model assumes 20% of the additional shares.) There are good reasons for this profit share distribution.

He will be providing management, as well as having done the initial investing.

As the enterprise grows, to some extent there will be more to manage. And from a fairness standpoint, keeping him happy, you don't want grounds for jealousy - having him feel that he should benefit from part of the enterprise's growth because he was instrumental in setting it up. Undoubtedly he had to work very hard managerially getting it set up (e.g. training people). The management of the enterprise should be very open and transparent with respect to the villagers' knowledge of what is going on.

### More Details on the Model (Table 1)

At the end of a year, in the seven year timeframe, labour invests 80% of its income for that year in additional productive assets. The model assumes straight capital widening, i.e. unchanged position on the production function, labour inputs increasing proportionately to the increase in capital. The new capital is available for use at the beginning of the following year. The firm's yearly profits increase by 50% of the cost of the additional capital (remember, this capital is being worked very hard). If a payback period of two years still seems short, taking labour-intensive measures such as multiple shifts into account, remember also the shift of the wage bill into the profit category.

New shares, corresponding to additional profits, are distributed 80% to labour and 20% to the business investor. Table 1 has a blank line separating YR5 from YR6. This blank line has a purpose, as will be explained.

As one can see from Table 1, the rate of growth in the shares of both labour and the business investor are startling. This is not unusual in growth models with a high coefficient of invested income. (Column M, "Percent Gain Labour Shares", is the driver. The rate of growth here is a constant 32 percent. Columns N and P, "Percent Gain Business Investor Shares" and "Percent Gain Total Shares", contain growth rates which converge through time to 32 percent, as shown by Table 3. This table has a twenty year time frame.)

Now for the blank line in Table 1. At some point the set of assumptions underlying this pure example of capital widening will cease to be valid. There is not an unlimited supply of already supported labour in the participating families. In Table I, after 5 years, the total new capital resulting from the workers' investing is 375.9 units, nearly double the initial capital investment of 200 units. Capital widening has thus increased labour utilization by 188%. The arbitrarily placed blank line indicates that it is appropriate to consider new rules, either capital deepening or supplementation of the families' labour force with outside wage earners.

Of these two alternatives, one would suspect that the participating workers and their families would prefer capital deepening. Granted the outside wage earners would get no shares, still it would seem more attractive to increase the per capita productivity of the existing

work force. No longer would increases in family returns depend solely on increasing labour input. The goal of a better life would be advanced by increasing per capita productivity.

**The goal of a better life would be advanced by increasing per capita productivity.**

A change in operations, which may occur within the investment period as described above, will certainly occur after the investment period and should be planned for from the start. For example, the workers may receive a wage in addition to income from the shares they own. Guidelines for division of profitability should be established in advance so as to preclude conflict when that time arrives.

### **Defusing Envy & Resentment**

The key initial decision, when planning was being done for the new enterprise, was that the participating families must not compete with ordinary wage earners. (Which they could do, very effectively, because of the family support.) But it would be terrible to undercut the wages of people who mostly have great need for all the wages they earn. The villagers realize that their plan should combine business with an acceptance strategy. The new enterprise must co-exist decently with what is already there in the local economy. Although taking advantage of labour intensity, it should not decimate existing labour-intensive operations.

The new industry should not pollute the village. Some charitable activity by the enterprise certainly wouldn't hurt. As will be argued later in the paper some of the workers' profits should go for present consumption (health and morale reasons) rather than being included in the investment schedule. But of course anything remotely ostentatious would be avoided, at least during the early years when working for acceptance.

### **Meeting the Needs of Participating Families**

The usefulness of some present consumption should be recognized. Merely from a moral standpoint, it would be counter-productive to postpone all consumption. In fact, without some increase in present consumption, it could be argued that the villagers would never become interested in the new arrangement in the first place. Moreover, there is one area where more than morale is involved. Providing basic health care has both humanitarian benefits and enables the enterprise labour to work with energy and enthusiasm. An obvious case of the enterprise doing well by doing good.

Consider enthusiasm. Years ago I read an article criticizing W.A. Lewis and others for their writings about disguised unemployment. The point of the article was "aren't you forgetting about the disutility of work - economic theory has always included the disutility of work." Obviously work can be associated with a great deal of disutility, such as working when feeling poorly.

And there are other reasons, such as boredom, or bitterness (e.g. feeling exploited because of an extremely low wage). What would be ideal would be for the workplace to be a setting where there would be considerable psychic income associated with work - being a valued member of a group working toward a goal, with hope for a considerably better future for their families.

Hope can be extremely energizing, but it should be handled with care. There must be no overselling, because disappointed expectations are bitter indeed. And God forbid the hopes of the workers be undermined by any sort of cheating or unfairness. Recall the earlier emphasis on transparency in management.

### **An Historical Precedent of Sorts - Striving for a Better Life**

The following quotation is from a book review in *The New Yorker* (1978). The review was about "The 'Lowell Offering': Writings by New England Mill Women (1840-45)", edited by Benita Eisler. "The Lowell Offering was a magazine published from 1840 to 1845 by the women mill workers of Lowell, Massachusetts. Mostly farm girls who were drawn there by the high wages (the factory paid them a dollar eighty-five to three dollars a week - then the highest wages in America paid to female employees) and the opportunity for self-improvement (free lectures and classes, group philosophy discussions), the women lived in boarding houses; worked

from five in the morning to seven at night, with several short breaks; labored with such diligence that the mill owners realized unprecedented profits; and still somehow managed to apply themselves to Latin, Greek, and John Greenleaf Whittier with enthusiasm. Many of the women were apparently convinced that their jobs were stepping stones to better jobs and a more genteel life - a hope that usually went unfulfilled, as did their marital expectations, since factory girls were considered unsuitable wives”.

A sad ending indeed. Yet consider that with the lure of a markedly better life, the young women “labored with such diligence” that “unprecedented profits” were realized.

### References

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- The New Yorker* (1978), March 27:134-35

### Appendix

#### Explanation for the Model, Table 1

Table 1 contains the data from a spreadsheet run of the model through a seven year period of agreed-on investment activity. The column designations, C through P, derive from the fact that a spreadsheet was used (Quattro Pro in this case). The columns will be described in some detail.

- C: The shares held by the businessman at the start of a particular year. This is his claim on the value added, the profits, of that year.
- D: The shares held by the individuals making up the labour force of the new enterprise, labour’s share.
- E: The percent of labour’s share of the particular year’s profits which will be invested in productive assets, available for production the following year.

- F: The amount of labour’s share invested.
- G: Additional profit as a percentage of the additional investment made available at the start of the particular year.
- H: The amount of profit this new investment will produce.
- I: Percent of the new shares allocated to labour.
- J: Number of new shares allocated to labour.
- K: Percent of the new shares allocated to the business investor.
- L: Number of new shares allocated to the business investor.
- M: Percent gain in total shares held by labour.
- N: Percent gain in total shares held by the business investor.

**Table 1**

	Shares, Start of Period - Claim on Period's Income:		Labour, Amount Income to be Invested		Resulting Additional Income, next Period		Resulting New Shares Allocated to Labour		Resulting New Shares Allocated to Bus. Investor		Percent Gain Labour Shares		Percent Gain Business Investor Shares		Base Total Shares		Percent Gain Total Shares	
	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
YR1	50	50	80	40	50	20	80	16	20	4	0.32	0.08	100	0.2				
YR2	54	66	80	52.8	50	26.4	80	21.1	20	5.3	0.32	0.098	120	0.22				
YR3	59.3	87.1	80	69.7	50	34.8	80	27.9	20	7	0.32	0.118	146.4	0.238				
YR4	66.2	115	80	92	50	46	80	36.8	20	9.2	0.32	0.139	181.2	0.254				
YR5	75.4	151.8	80	121.4	50	60.7	80	48.6	20	12.1	0.3	0.161	227.2	0.267				
YR6	87.6	200.4	80	160.3	50	80.1	80	64.1	20	16	0.32	0.183	288	0.278				
YR7	103.6	264.5	80	211.6	50	105.8	80	84.6	20	21.2	0.32	0.204	368.1	0.287				
End of period	124.8	349.1																

**Table 2: The Spreadsheet Formulas Used to Derive Table 1.**

	Shares, Start of Period - Claim on Period's Income:		Labour, Amount Income to be Invested		Resulting Additional Income, next Period		Resulting New Shares Allocated to Labour		Resulting New Shares Allocated to Bus. Investor		Percent Gain Labour Shares		Percent Gain Business Investor Shares		Base Total Shares		Percent Gain Total Shares	
	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
YR1	50	(D9+J9)	80	(D9*0.8)	50	(F9*0.5)	80	(H9*0.8)	20	(H9*0.2)	(J9/D9)	(L9/C9)	(C9+D9)	(H9/O9)				
YR2	(C9+L9)	(D9+J10)	80	(D10*0.8)	50	(F10*0.5)	80	(H10*0.8)	20	(H10*0.2)	(J10/D10)	(L10/C10)	(C10+D10)	(H10/O10)				
YR3	(C10+L10)	(D10+J11)	80	(D11*0.8)	50	(F11*0.5)	80	(H11*0.8)	20	(H11*0.2)	(J11/D11)	(L11/C11)	(C11+D11)	(H11/O11)				
YR4	(C11+L11)	(D11+J12)	80	(D12*0.8)	50	(F12*0.5)	80	(H12*0.8)	20	(H12*0.2)	(J12/D12)	(L12/C12)	(C12+D12)	(H12/O12)				
YR5	(C12+L12)	(D12+J13)	80	(D13*0.8)	50	(F13*0.5)	80	(H13*0.8)	20	(H13*0.2)	(J13/D13)	(L13/C13)	(C13+D13)	(H13/O13)				
YR6	(C13+L13)	(D13+J14)	80	(D14*0.8)	50	(F14*0.5)	80	(H14*0.8)	20	(H14*0.2)	(J14/D14)	(L14/C14)	(C14+D14)	(H14/O14)				
YR7	(C14+L14)	(D14+J15)	80	(D15*0.8)	50	(F15*0.5)	80	(H15*0.8)	20	(H15*0.2)	(J15/D15)	(L15/C15)	(C15+D15)	(H15/O15)				
end of period	(C15+L15)	(D15+J15)																

O: Total shares outstanding at the start of a particular year.

P: Percent gain in total shares.

In Table 1, the monetary unit is some arbitrary amount. Arbitrary is alright in this case because the purpose of the table is to show relationships and growth over the seven year timeframe. A share, a claim on profits, comes into being when some number of these monetary units is invested in productive assets, capital. In this model, two invested monetary units create one new share. Since a rapid payback period of two years is assumed, the two invested monetary units also create an increase of one monetary unit of profit per following year.

Thus at the start of year 1, the initial allocation of 100 shares (50 for the businessman and 50 for the villagers) is the result of 200 monetary units having been invested by the businessman, to get things started. For the first year, 100 monetary units of profit are expected, and realized. Of the 50 monetary units earned by labour from its shares, 80% is invested, 40 monetary units. This translates to 20 new shares at the start of year 2, and 20 monetary units of additional profit for year 2.

**Table 3: Convergence of Yearly Percent Gains, Business Investor's Shares and Total Shares, with Percent Gain in Labour's Shares**

	Percent Gain Total Shares	Percent Gain Business Investor Shares
YR1	—	—
YR2	.2	.08
YR3	.22	.098
YR4	.238	.118
YR5	.254	.139
YR6	.267	.161
YR7	.278	.183
YR8	.287	.204
YR9	.295	.224
YR10	.3	.241
YR11	.305	.257
YR12	.308	.270
YR13	.311	.280
YR14	.313	.289
YR15	.315	.296
YR16	.316	.301
YR17	.317	.306
YR18	.3178	.309
YR19	.3183	.312
YR20	.3187	.314

## Communication

# Women Managers in Emerging Urban Spaces

**R. Nalini**

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*Unlike the metropolis, where women managers are not uncommon, these evolving urban spaces are still largely closed to the idea of women in decision making roles in the workplace. However, women have begun adorning managerial roles in these smaller towns and cities. This paper is an attempt to understand the women from small towns, the emerging urban spaces, striving to make a career in the management world.*

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### Being a Woman & a Manager

Place yourself in this situation: you are a young woman, management postgraduate, university topper, aspiring to make a mark in the corporate sector. You want a factory job, at the shop floor, in the production hub. You start appearing for interviews along with your classmates – confident and dreamy. First bad news – you are not picked by major corporate players in the industry and the reason is not your performance. While your mediocre male batch mates have all been placed, you aren't. Justification: they cannot accommodate women in the factory. The openings coming through are at the non-production area that does not fascinate you. The second bad news – after initial reluctance, in a few months and fearing stagnation, you accept this job offer! Thus, yet another woman manager has begun her career with frustration and uncertainty. Such a situation may appear to be pessimistic but is true in many instances. Check out with women managers and they will have a story of compromise to narrate while making careers.

Though the numbers of working women have increased over the years, very few of them choose to become

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managers. Women managers are more common in public sector than in the private, but even here the number of women in managerial positions is fewer than it should have been. Women's potentials as managers have not been tapped to its optimum by the corporate sector. "Although women have been guaranteed constitutional equality and have occupied permanent positions in government since India's independence, only recently have they come to assume managerial positions in business organizations. A limited survey of 33 female executives across a wide range of industries led to the conclusion that Indian women have fewer opportunities for promotion than men; but once promoted they perform as well as men in executive positions. However, despite the fact that these Indian women believed they could successfully combine the roles of wife and executive, some questioned the appropriateness of continuing to work if they had small children" (Adler & Dafna 1988).

In spite of women being successful and proficient in their corporate careers, why are they so less in number in all the countries of the world? Could it be attributed to the structural and psychological barriers they face? It is relevant here to discuss Gladys L. Symon's view on gender roles. The gender roles imposed on men and women seem to branch into their careers. Women

are constantly called upon to manage their gender identity in a masculine world of work. To pursue a career, women must first and foremost situate themselves with respect to men. Men, on the other hand, develop their careers by positioning themselves in relation to their organization. Women in business have been both hidden and silenced by male models of career and masculine stereotypes of managers and entrepreneurs.

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The Indian business houses were initially mostly male dominated and were unable to conceive jobs for women in the hierarchy. Thus while it was possible for young men with potential to rise towards managerial capacities even if they had joined in non-managerial positions, it was not so in the case of women. With the best of capabilities and efficiency, women tend to stagnate at lower level positions.

Stress is inherent in a manager's job. But the strain is more on the woman manager. Though she also is partly responsible for this situation, we must consider the hurdles she would have to struggle over.

### **Family, Marriage & Women Roles**

One of the primary conflicts of a career woman is balancing the multiple traditional roles. Managerial success

demands self-confidence, assertiveness, taking up responsibility while the traditional female role suggests submissiveness, supportiveness and dependency. These totally opposite role expectations often block a woman's career progress, whereas for a man there are no such deviations in role expectations. Hence men in the managerial positions are able to move ahead with confidence and firmness.

Marriage has different effects in men's and women's career growths. It is a blessing for a man since it adds to his stability and lessens his household burden. There is someone to take up his responsibility at the home front and this means he is all the more involved with his work. But for a woman, marriage means a totally new phase, with loads of domestic responsibility and a career dependent on her husband. Thus, as men blend with ease and gain from their career and marriage, women struggle. While a few do succeed, many do not. With the phase of motherhood that is bound to follow, women find their focus shifting to family and profession taking a beating.

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Sitting at the office, without worrying about the ticking clock is a man's prerogative. But for a woman it (the ticking clock) is a matter of concern – irrespective of her marital status. Here

also, there are confusions in expectations. A woman manager who does not mind working late nights is looked down upon as irresponsible from the family front. The woman who points out inconveniences in this regard is ridiculed as unfit and womanly.

Maternity is yet to be accommodated in career cycles of most employment providing sectors. Woman finds her upward movement restricted due to her biological clock. She has to accept delays in promotion for such reasons that are an inseparable part of her life. There are several instances when women totally give up their careers due to marriage and child birth.

Indian career women are apt examples of role conflicts. At home their roles make them dependent and restrict them to "doers". At the office, as managers they are expected to be independent and assertive. This role switching affects women's careers. By disentangling themselves from the glorified ideals of womanhood, women can make a meaningful career.

### **A Woman Manager's Self-perception**

The manner in which women managers perceive themselves depends largely on the role expectations of the society. Consequent to the traditional role models they are expected to conform to, women often get frustrated and confused in handling sexual discriminations at the work front. While some want to challenge such inequalities, many feel guilty about "neglecting" their households.

Due to these factors, insecurity persists in conducting oneself in the organization. One woman manager who was interviewed was from a small town and who was the only woman manager in her organization, said “There were lots of women employed but in the non-managerial category. In the interactions with them, I was kept at a distance since I was a manager. To them, I was an alien. In mixing with managers who were men, I could sense their resentment based on gender issues. Used to relating to women in the non-managerial category, these men hardly valued my contribution. The situation was stressful and made simple things difficult. I was judged on the basis of traditional role expectations, rather than my performance. After lot of introspection and discussions with my professors I struck upon the inspiration that as a woman and a manager, I need to just interact, not identify myself with any group. As a result my ventilation points were restricted and whatever was the problem at the career front, I never disclosed to my colleagues”.

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Similarly, some women may have to overcome lack of self-confidence. Women tend to attribute their success to providence and under rate their capacity. Such attitudes serve as self inflicted obstructions to their professional progress.

### **Career & Stereotyping**

A manager is necessarily a learner since managing calls for a lot of trial and error. What is suitable in one situation does not fit another. Women managers are already a point of focus and are conscious not to falter. For, they know by their experiences, that their mistakes will be viewed with a magnifying glass, criticized and will also lead to labelling.

### **The Spotlight Effect**

Another oppressive effect of stereotyping is the ‘spotlight effect’ due to which any woman manager becomes a model, a kind of a representative or a spokesperson for all other women. This may be something quite foreign to her wishes. But it is an inevitable result of her being the ‘only one’.

**No mistakes can be made, any that do occur will be magnified and may lead to stereotyping.**

The fact that a woman is a single example of her kind in a group, that she represents a minority of one, inevitably makes her the subject of extra attention. There are, of course, certain positive effects – she will definitely be seen and heard. The negative impacts are – no mistakes can be made, any that do occur will be magnified and may lead to stereotyping. People tend to expect that a mistake or a kind of behaviour that it is typical will be repeated. Many myths have been developed in this way, such as:

- A woman manager is often forced to be tougher and harder than a man in order to gain respect.
- A woman is always better prepared when she comes to a meeting.
- A woman manager is much more understanding and better at listening than a man would be.

The last two statements are admittedly positive, but like all other stereotyped expectations, they will divert attention from the woman as an individual, also categorizing and tethering her to a role which she has to live up to, even if, as an individual, she does not fit into it. If she is not particularly good at listening to people she will be adjudged 'unfeminine'. Unfortunately, men are not the only ones to support this stereotype. Women, particularly those who have not tried the difficult and lonely role of the leader, do it as well. There is interplay, often subtle, of stereotypical attitudes towards women and women's work in organizations, such as job of assistant seems fitting for her, as a service role with little responsibility. (Gisele Asplund 1988: 54-55).

### **Communication Patterns in the Organization**

There are two forms of communication in any organization – formal and informal. While formal communication is open, direct and disseminated officially, getting into an informal communication network is difficult. There is free flow of information in this network and it cuts across the hierarchy.

As in practice, information in an organization first flows informally and then gets formal. Woman managers do not find an easy entry into a male dominated managerial informal communication network. By virtue of remaining outside this network, woman managers often lose out on valuable, quick information.

**Woman managers do not find an easy entry into a male dominated managerial informal communication network.**

A HR Head of a manufacturing organization adds, "each organization also has subgroups based on power centres that stretch to all levels. These power centres keep changing and with it the politics changes. The importance of subgroups and the control they wield have a bearing on the functioning of the organizations and career growth of individuals. The most surprising fact is that women managers generally keep away from these activities".

### **The Painstaking Career Climb**

Women are preoccupied with their home front and very few of them aspire for new heights in their career. Most of them prefer a career with less responsibility. They are busy supporting their family needs that their individual career dreams take a back seat. In spite of possessing the requisite calibre many women choose to stay out of promotions since it involves transfers, increased travelling, residential training prog-

rammes and sometimes visits to other nations.

Women managers have a risk of being misunderstood while executing their duties. For example, meeting a male candidate outside office for an interview or travelling with the boss on official grounds or just extra hours of working together may raise eyebrows. Awareness of such possibilities inhibits the work atmosphere and the individuals involved.

The most painful of all is the possibility of sexual harassment. Many women undergo this soreness – being approached for sexual favours. It could be directly or indirectly asked for and the marital status here is immaterial. The consequences have always been damaging – life and careers have been doomed, not to forget the psychological scar it leaves on the victims.

Job related emotional behaviour also gets differential reactions. When a man screams at his subordinates to get things done, he is appreciated for his aggressive nature. A woman's outlet is criticized – be it crying or shouting. She is expected to be calm, soft and 'womanly' in her approach. In other words a woman's assertiveness is viewed as disrespect and a man's as showing involvement. Thus, women in management have to deal with prejudices, bias and stereotypes.

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### **What Could be Done?**

Management as a career for any woman should be a matter of choice, other opportunities being equal. The voices of women fighting their way in the managerial roles need to be heard. From its present male inclination the managerial world should become neutral in its demands. Women's way of managing and leading should be accommodated without any comparisons to the male way of doing things. This could enable more participation from women in management.

Attitudinal change into viewing both the sexes equally and objectively is a slow process. This calls for openness in accepting women as managers. The seeds have to be sown early and gender education has a key role to play in this connection. NGOs have to take up this issue more seriously.

Women should disregard their gender at work. This will speed up their endeavours to a bright career. All they need to remember is that work gets top most priority and seeking any kind of concessions on grounds of gender will only weaken their mission. They should believe that they have a great responsibility to shoulder as upholders of a challenge.

Lastly, women managers in India need to organize themselves in order to

**Women should disregard their gender at work.**

enable sharing of professional knowledge, experience and problems and ways of balancing their lives and careers.

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