A Review of Perspectives on Women Managers: A Three Country Analysis

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Abstract: Women's issues have been at the forefront of various movements, discussions, discourses, policy decisions and strategies from the last century onwards. In the 21st century, as we celebrate women's achievements, it is imperative to acknowledge and overcome the challenges, for women that still persist. Gender discriminatory practices hamper women's personal lives as well as professional growth. Women, across the globe, negotiate to overcome gender prejudices, stereotyping, condescending attitudes along with the pressures of performing in the competitive work environment. In this context, this paper explores the contextual challenges of women managers in three countries in Asia – India, Japan and China. Further, the focus of the paper would be to examine the factors that create impediments for women managers which consequently lead to lesser number of women at the top-level management positions. The paper uses existing literature and relevant secondary dataset from the three-country context, to depict, document and expose the prejudices and bias that women managers face in these countries. In the end, the paper provides the futuristic agenda to support women managers, and women led operations in corporate setups so as to enhance their representation and proficiency that will ultimately transform the work culture across the globe.

1. Introduction

Social discourses and movements around women's issues have initiated debates and deliberations highlighting varied issues such as gender differences, gender discrimination, oppression, missed opportunities and more. The present century is marked by the aim and vision to frame outcome-based goals, strategies and themes to achieve gender equality. With the quarter of the 21st century already over, it is imperative, on the one hand, to celebrate the achievements and milestones in women empowerment along with a stock taking of the still persisting challenges in achieving complete gender equality in all spheres of life. Countries, the world over, have undertaken huge measures to abolish gender discriminatory laws and practices, to establish and implement remedial and corrective measures. Yet, it becomes more difficult in the corporate and business world wherein women face opportunity crunch, and various challenges as they climb up the professional ladder. These challenges become overwhelming due to the quintessential stereotyping leading to vertical segregation placing men above women in the same professional bracket and management positions (Anker, 1997).

Management, conventionally, has been considered men's forte and thus, has been dominated by them (Adler and Izraeli, 1994; Marshall, 1995; Arttachariya, 1997). This is a global phenomenon that becomes more precarious in countries of the global south wherein promoting female talent is not a strategic focus in the professional setup. Thus, it becomes a critical challenge for women professionals and managers to negotiate around gender prejudices, stereotyping, condescending attitudes alongside performing in the competitive work environment. In this context, this paper uses a qualitative

approach of 3 country context analysis by using content analysis on review of perspectives on women managers. The paper provides a contextual analysis of the challenges that women professionals and managers face in three countries in Asia – India, Japan and China due to gender barriers and tactical response or the lack of it. These countries have been chosen due to their geographical proximity (same continent) giving rise to similar cultural underpinnings and social value system. Also, equally important is the economic status of these countries as well-established or fast developing economies of the world. The paper further explores the factors creating impediments that women face in corporate and professional setup which consequently contributes to lesser number of women breaking the glass ceiling to reach the top-level managerial positions. Using both the extant literature (though miniscule) and relevant secondary dataset from the three-country context, the paper aims to depict, document and expose the prejudices and bias that women managers face in these countries. In the end, the paper provides the futuristic agenda to support women managers and women led operations in corporate setups so as to enhance their representation and proficiency that will ultimately transform the work culture across the globe.

This paper has been organized in six sections including introduction. The second section presents a review of literature on women manager's issues plaguing 21st century corporate sector. The third section outlines the methodological aspects followed towards exploration of the objectives. The fourth section presents case analysis of how women professionals and managers are faring in India, Japan and China. The fifth section discusses findings and the futuristic roadmap. The sixth section offers concluding remarks.

2. Women Managers in the 21st Century: Theoretical Underpinnings

For a very long time, women's movements have been centred on achieving gender equality in social, political, cultural and economic spheres. The difference in the role and responsibilities according to gender have been hierarchized and overtly valued more for men than women. Thus, men and women are the "intended or unintended product(s) of a social practice" (Haslanger, 1995, p. 97) whereby women's contributions and voices are devalued, and their status is neglected. So, achieving gender equality has enormous socio-economic ramifications with women realizing their dreams, and breaking the glass ceilings to overcome organized systems of vertical segregation in the professional setup. In order to ensure prompt and effective action, most countries have ratified women and child related international conventions. At the same time, most constitutions in the world also guarantee measures to ensure girls' right to education and protect women's political rights, protections from discrimination at work, the right to equal pay for equal work, prohibition of sexual harassment in the workplace etc. Yet, regressive laws like the anti-abortion law in the USA have made a comeback in 2024; women in countries like Afghanistan cannot work, attend school or even be heard in public; 30% women the world over face physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime which is one in every three women in the world; 500 million women lack access to menstrual products globally; 650 million women and girls have been married before they are 18 year old; 71% of all human trafficking victims worldwide are women and girls; gender health gap equates to 75 million years of life lost globally[1]. Corporate sector, the world over, is equally marred by the gender discriminatory practices such as the gender pay gap which stands at 20% globally indicating that women managers earn less than their male counterparts for the same work; and women may climb up the professional ladder but they still own less than a fifth of the business globally and hold less than one-fourth of the senior corporate roles worldwide. In USA alone, only 10% of the top 500 companies have female CEOs and in India the figure stands at 5%. This may not look good but there are

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[1] https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1153151
https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/facts-and-figures/facts-and-figures-ending-violence-against-women#:~:text=Global%20scale%20of%20violence%20against,does%20not%20include%20sexual%20harassment.
https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/bulletin/online-first/blt.24.291421.pdf
https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/fast-facts-10-facts-illustrating-why-we-must-endchildmarriage
https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/12/report-majority-of-trafficking-victims-are-women-and-girls-one-third-children/#
https://www.mckinsey.com/mhi/focus-areas/equity-and-health/womens-health

countries such as Ireland and Luxembourg which have zero female CEO in top companies[2]. The path to achieving equality for women is set, it is the negotiations and strategies that are yet to be worked out.

It is to be acknowledged that women, in modern times, have managed to find sizeable representation in the academic, political, business and finance fields. Even women entrepreneurs are recognized as a potential force to reckon. These achievements do not subside the challenges that the 'new' age woman faces both personally and professionally. Statistics on women employment, pay parity and political representation show that their participation and leadership roles are still negligible. Despite legislative progress around gender equality, in many countries, providing equal rights and opportunities to women, they are still cloistered mainly in female dominated fields (childcare, nursing, education etc.), and lower levels in management with low remuneration. Women managers are as proficient as their male counterparts at delivering results, yet their outcome driven efforts are less likely to be appreciated. The scenario in countries like India, Japan and China becomes further complicated due to complex social, economic and cultural factors. India is a curious case study, where centuries of invasions and the British colonial domination have contributed to a narrow mind-set that continues to grip the social imagination in the country. Even in economically advanced country like Japan, women are traditionally expected to take the responsibility of household work and child rearing (Cho et al., 2015) as is explicit in *ryosaikenbo* – the Japanese 'ideology of good wife, wise mother' (Welsh et al., 2014). While in China, studies show that women managers are ill positioned than their male counterparts to deal with market threats, shifting technologies and financial insecurity in gender stereotyped scenario (Cooke, 2022). In terms of broader economic scenario worldwide, women continue to experience lack of financial autonomy and remuneration for unpaid household tasks. As for the corporate sector, management companies, in general, facilitate gender imbalances at different levels of managerial positions, and imperceptibly but sometimes overtly also, promote gender discriminatory policies. Studies reveal that when employed in managerial positions, women receive lower salaries, and restricted career advancements than male employees (Carter and Silva, 2010). Disparity in perks, due to gender differences, grows with organizational hierarchy reaching up to 30% in senior positions (Kulich et al 2011).

A very disturbing trend globally shows that mid-career women, who are highly educated and are early achievers, encounter much higher levels of bias and discrimination at workplace. Harvard Business Review conducted a study in 2021 to highlight how mid-career women across sectors like education, corporate, PSUs, services, have to pull through subtle barriers comprising 'unfair assumptions' which arise out of the belief that since mid-career women are actively parenting, they would be less dedicated to their careers. This 'motherhood penalty' is less explicit, and is masked as concern for the woman employee[3]. Even the organizational networks become highly exclusionary and gendered at mid-career limiting opportunities for women further. Senior male leadership and male managers may socialize beyond office an hour which significantly enhances scope of promotion and upgrade for them. Since, stakes are very high for mid-career employees, competitiveness takes new dimensions with gender-based insecurities taking centre stage, women managers' inaccessibility/accessibility becoming an office conversation and their administrative decisions getting over scrutinized. Policy statements do not translate into actions, and idealized notions of meritocracy are "difficult to operationalize in the face of corridor politics and informal communication systems" (Piterman, 2008, pp. 10). A commonly felt cultural prejudice, globally but most perceptibly in the countries of the global south, is reflected in the male attitude that sees it not appropriate for men to be subordinated by women in public life (Caplow, 1954, Kar et al 2015). Such an attitude creates barriers to bring about changes in the occupational choices for men and women (Burton, 1987). Organizational theorists highlight several factors such as organizational culture and structure responsible for lower representation of women in management positions (Mintzberg, 1973). Psychological theories

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[2] https://www.ilo.org/resource/other/gender-pay-gap#:~:text=Gender%20pay%20gaps%20represent%20one,are%20wide%20variations%20across%20countries.
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-04-30/ireland-now-has-zero-female-listed-ceos
[3] https://hbr.org/2022/09/3-workplace-biases-that-derail-mid-career-women

postulate that men and women are socialized to accept different roles even in professional setup which consequently is reflected in organizational preferences for engaging women and men for different work profiles (Eagly, 1987, Eagly et al, 2000). It is true that the representation of women managers has considerably enhanced, the world over, in lower and middle level positions especially in non-tech sectors such as HR, administrative and personnel areas. But the barriers and glass ceilings at higher management positions still persist, and can only be overcome with changes from within the rubrics of society and its institutions. Slogans of universal human rights, including gender equality, need to be supplemented with localized discussions of adaptation and application (Ortenblad et.al, 2017). Strategies as actions need to be deployed to address and resolve expectations of gender role categorization; to gain manoeuvrability, to negotiate structural limitations and challenges of intersectionality. In this context, this paper aims at addressing the lack of research on this very critical issue. Hence the specific objective of this paper is to explore the challenges and impediments of women managers in the selected three country contexts of India, Japan and China. The paper further explores the factors creating impediments that women face in corporate and professional setup which consequently contributes to lesser number of women breaking the glass ceiling to reach the top-level managerial positions. Furthermore, the paper aims at providing futuristic agenda to support women managers and women led operations in corporate setups so as to enhance their representation and proficiency that will ultimately transform the work culture across the globe.

3. Country Context Construct: Methodological Aspects

Globally, gender equality, in the professional world in general and the corporate sector in particular, has made some progress in the first quarter of the 21st century given the policy initiatives and statistical evidence showing efforts towards equal treatment (if not representation), inclusion, expectations and benefits for women managers. Yet, the situation on the ground is much more complex than the commitment of compliance, to global directives such as SDG 5 and CEDAW, would indicate. The social norms, values and cultural prejudices along with lacunae in policy and regulatory consequences for noncompliance, in different country contexts, become the bases to understand why gender equality has not progressed as expected and predicted. This exploration requires a framework of qualitative research methods to analyse the three countries in question. For that matter, we have employed a qualitative approach of analysing the three country contexts through a content analysis of wide body of extant secondary sources as described in theoretical underpinnings. Qualitative methods generally used to analyse "country constructs" by exploring the lived experiences, perspectives, and narratives of individuals within a country. This can involve methods like ethnography, interviews, focus groups, and case study narratives to gather rich, descriptive data about the social, cultural, political and other realities of a country. Such qualitative method is necessary for scientific inquiry that emphasizes the depth and richness of context and voice in understanding social phenomena. This methodology is constructive or interpretive, aiming to unveil the "what," "why," "when," "where," "who," and "how" behind social behaviours and interactions, rather than merely quantifying occurrences (Lim, 2023). Further, researchers (Stake, 1994; Yin, 1994) tested a case study method to provide insight into the relevant issues pertaining to a research topic involving what, how and why queries. Furthermore, Dyer and Wilkins (1991, p. 615) argued that the ultimate goal of case study is to provide a rich description of the social scene, to describe the context in which events occur, and to reveal a deep structure of social behaviour. Therefore, firstly an extant content analysis has been carried out focusing on examining the political, economic, social, and environmental factors within three specific countries of India, Japan and China to understand their unique characteristics, and how the research questions pertaining to women managers have been addressed. Accordingly, the researchers have developed the following three country cases constructs of India, Japan and China. These three countries have been chosen due to their geographical proximity, similar cultural and social value systems. Secondly, the economic status of these countries definitely helped us selecting these countries for the case analysis. These case studies have helped us analyse the country contexts to document challenges, prejudices and bias towards women managers in these countries, and consequently understand how they are dealing with this. Further, it helped us to give an impetus to futuristic agenda for women managers in the corporate set up.

3.1 Three Country Analysis

In the countries of analysis – India, Japan and China, organizational cultures facilitate gendered interactions which not only curtail women managers' promotional prospects but also debilitate their skills and experience at the workplace. For further exploration, the country wise analysis is conducted so as to understand the social setup, organizational value system, competitive trends, challenges and impediments to women managers' advancement in the professional world.

3.1.1 India

In India, gender dynamics are shaped by complex historical and societal impacts of centuries of violent invasions, and colonial onslaught on the subcontinent. India had been an advanced civilization for centuries where "there is no dearth of legendary narratives of women empowerment, extraordinary women leaders" (Kar, 2019, p. 97). There is a continuous and long tradition of legendary women beginning with Gargi, known for her intellectual contributions; Rudrama Devi, known for exceptional leadership; Ahilya Bai Holkar known for her perseverance and protection of *dharma*; Chinnamma, known for good governance and wisdom; freedom fighters like Sarojini Naidu, Savitribai Phule and many more. Along with these exemplary women from history, there are many successful Indian women business leaders such as Kiran Majumdar-Shaw (Chairperson and MD of Asia's largest insulin producer company Biocon Ltd) and Indra Nooyi (former CEO of Pepsi Co.) who have overcome gender barriers, and have contributed to India's growth trajectory in the 21st century. These success stories, all the more, highlight that women's leadership is a crucial yet under-utilized asset for India's progress. Data shows that organizations with greater representation of women, both at the managerial and executive positions, show better financial performance and continued sustainable growth (KPMG, 2024). Thus, the focus, in companies, should not just be on engaging women in leadership positions but also to create such organizational culture where their immense capabilities are harnessed, and unique insights are valued in boardrooms. The Indian corporate landscape is rapidly evolving despite the challenges that persist in achieving gender parity at senior level management. A positive trend shows that 23% organizations have 30-50% women in leadership roles and 12% companies have even crossed that mark. A very concerning career advancement trend shows that less than 30% of women hired at the entry level ever occupy leadership positions as compared to men (KPMG, 2024). As the Indian corporate scenario celebrates extraordinary women who have shattered glass ceilings, the not so encouraging figures highlight missed opportunities and multifaceted challenges for women managers. There are deep rooted social prejudices that obstruct women's aspirations to leadership roles, work-life balance is a continuing struggle, societal expectations of childcare and domestic responsibilities are overwhelming, concealed biases at workplace and inadequate mentoring hamper their progress. It is true that, over the past few decades, women, in India, have made their mark as leaders in fields like politics, academia, business, IT, research and science. But there remain glass ceilings in spheres like higher judiciary, which women have not been able to break. The percentage of women judges in the High Courts is only 14.27% (109 out of 764). Women judges do not reach senior positions as indicative from the fact that out of 25 High Courts in the country, only one (Gujarat) has a woman Chief Justice. The scenario is much worse in Supreme Court which has only two women judges serving at present[4]. However, there are better results in education sector where there are 75 women Vice Chancellors in India, which is just over 20% of total number of Vice Chancellors in India as per Association of Indian Universities (AIU) data. Thus, it is crucial to acknowledge that there is a significant gender gap in leadership positions across the sectors in India that highlight persisting systemic challenges that need to be addressed with urgency.

3.1.2 Japan

The social dynamics in Japan significantly inform gender interactions in the country. Femininity is strongly associated with the idea of 'good wife and wise mother '(*ryosaikenbo*) which is traditionally

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[4] https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/closing-the-gender-gap-in-the-higher-judiciary/article69310095.ece#:~:text=However%2C%20there%20remains%20a%20glass,Tripura%20have%20no%20woman%20judge.

an East Asian ideal in countries like Japan, China and South Korea (Boiling, 2008). Though the aftermath of WWII brought about considerable social and political reforms in Japan, with women getting equal rights as men (Article 14), Japanese women did not actively enter the workforce till the 1990s due to the rapid economic growth. The "breadwinner-housewife model…referred to as the salaryman model" (Kehrwieder, 2024) had been very popular in Japanese society till it became no longer sustainable after the bubble economy burst in 1992 when Japanese families felt the need for dual income to combat inflation. Prior to the 90s, women participation in the workforce was low due to various factors like forced marriage retirement, sexual harassment and unequal pay. There is an old practice of shoulder tap (*kata-tataki*) in the country wherein tapping the shoulder of an employee is an indication that they must leave or they will be sacked. It was women who were often tapped to coerce them into marriage retirement. Japan, being a patrilineal society, has long-established gender ideology that makes it problematic for men to welcome women in the workplace. Even when women do join the workforce, they are, in most cases, given the position of the office lady (OL) who performs administrative or clerical tasks. This position exists in nearly every office in Japan, and was created to "keep women in menial roles and maintain as much of the traditional system as possible" (Kehrwieder, 2024). If we are to talk about the female representation in senior management roles then Japan features among the lowest the world over. While there has been noticeable improvement in achieving higher female employment in the last decade yet 54% of the working women are engaged in irregular jobs and are acutely underrepresented in managerial roles. The proportion of women managers in private sector is 13% which is much below the OECD average of 34% (Asao et al, 2024). Among the G20 countries, Japan features in the lowest position for smallest proportion of women in senior roles with 5.3%, just above Saudi Arabia[5]. Organizational systems in Japan profoundly impact women's access to leadership positions which is why women make up only 8.3% of managerial positions as of 2016 (Nakamura & Horimoto, 2017). One such system comprises a promotion track (*sogoshoku)* and a non-promotion track (*ippanshoku*). Most of the women hires, in the country, are non-promotion which significantly curtails career advancement opportunities for them from the beginning itself. The other is seniority (*nenko*) system in which employees are rewarded based on long service that apply to regular male workers only (Nakata & Takehiro, 2002; Wakisaka, 2011). There are cultural barriers also to women taking up leadership positions in the country where a traditional division of labour ideology persists till date. Women, customarily, bear the burden of childcare, elderly-care and household work due to which 60% of Japanese women exit the labour force after child birth (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2011). More importantly, Japanese workplace do not have women leadership role models that women managers can look up to and aspire to follow. All in all, women managers' aspirations, in Japan, are thwarted by multi layered factors ranging from social norms, cultural outlook and organizational systems.

3.1.3 China

Chinese culture perceives women as the weaker sex who need protection, and are expected to actively take up housekeeping and family care role as their primary function (Gao, 2003; Zhu et al., 2021). Women have been dependent on their fathers, husbands and children in different phases of life defining the social and cultural discourse around gender inequality in the country. Lives of women substantially changed after 1949 with the founding of PRC (People's Republic of China) that brought about social and economic reforms towards achieving gender equality. It is not as if there was an overnight shift in the social and cultural outlook towards gender roles in China after 1949 rather the Chinese state mobilized feminist movement to advance the country's economic development through women's participation (Hu, 2016). Luo and Hao's study (2007) reveals: the image of Chinese women presented by the mass media [which is heavily sanctioned by the state] is to a large extent influenced by the socio-economic and political-ideological changes in China. Rather than a literal portrayal of the 'reality', it is a symbolic representation of the Chinese women created through the interaction of party ideology, editorial policy, and readers' taste as well as the changing reality of Chinese women's life

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[5] https://womenleadersindex.com/report/

and work. The interlocking of party control and societal influences has determined the typical images of 'Chinese Women' suited to particular periods of time in the contemporary Chinese history. (281)

Such a view clearly highlights that the Chinese state dominates the feminist discourse in the country making it rather difficult for any independent women's movement to materialize. As for the women managers in China, there is advancement for them due to legal and policy interventions but the barriers such as traditional gender norms, discriminatory practices in organizations, work-life challenges and others, remain formidable (Liu, 2013; Liu et al., 2020; Yang, 2020). Though the national policy in China advocates gender equality, the barriers to women managers' career progression are, foremost, to be attributed to institutional structures created by men who are responsible for maintaining the status quo of masculine power (Cooke, 2023). Women managers, in China, are poorly positioned than their male counterparts due to perceived weaknesses among them including "biased social perceptions, role changes at work and home, and innate obstacles, such as being timid/gentle, risk-averse, and having insufficient confidence and competence" (Cooke, 2023, p. 378). Due to all these factors, China is among such countries that have the smallest proportion of women (9.3%) in senior management and is the only G20 member nation where this percentage slipped down 3.3 points in 2022 as compared to previous years [6]. It is also interesting to note the impact of Confucianism, even in present day China, that prescribes a structural gender inequality in which Chinese women occupy lower social status than men. (Liu, H. et al., 2022). Further, Liu (2022) highlights that companies, with headquarters in Confucianism influenced regions of China, are less likely to appoint a woman as the CEO. These institutional and cultural barriers to women managers' career advancement in China, highlight the need to develop a fair and inclusive work place that must accommodate women managers' voices, and facilitate their capacities.

4. Discussion and Futuristic Agenda

As per the civilizational history of India, women were at par with men in various spheres; they were highly respected in society, and had access to education, and freedom to participate in religious and intellectual pursuits during *Vedic* times. However, their status deteriorated gradually afterwards. Still, India has a glorified list of remarkable women leaders, philosophers and rulers. In the last thousand years, we have had the examples of Rani Rudrama Devi (born in 1259 CE), the queen of the Kakatiya dynasty; she was trained in statecraft, military tactics, and administration from a young age. Her education equipped her to rule effectively and expand her kingdom. Rani Durgavati (born in 1524), the queen of Gondwana, was known for her bravery and intellect. She was well-versed in Sanskrit, Persian and the local dialects, and very effectively managed her kingdom, and lead her army against the Mughal invasion. Maharani Tarabai, (born in 1675), was a key figure in the Maratha Empire and was well-educated in politics, military strategy and administration. Rani Chennamma of Kittur (born in 1778), was a warrior queen known for her resistance against British empire, and was very well trained in statecraft, military tactics and local governance. Ahilyabai Holkar (born in 1725), the queen of the Malwa kingdom, was renowned for her administrative skills and deep knowledge of scriptures and philosophy. Rani Lakshmi Bai or Rani of Jhansi is one the most well-known women rulers of India, and played a crucial role in the Revolt of 1857.

However, in modern times, cultural prejudices and challenges inhibit women's path to progress and growth in the corporate world of India. These challenges and limitations can only be eliminated through strategies and policy initiatives that address such cultural nuances and organizational workings. Instances of empowered women, as quoted above, highlight the impact of path breaking policies which, when adopted, make way for great women leaders and entrepreneurs who redefine the workplace dynamics, and also inspire millions of women to follow their aspirations and ambitions. Thus, women managers, wherever the possibility arises, overcome the trappings of male controlled workplaces, and breach the senior management positions to reach the top. Though, women's representation in the leadership roles have considerably risen, such inspiring stories are still rare.

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[6] https://womenleadersindex.com/report/

Majority of the country are yet to achieve complete gender equality within and beyond institutions. Gender stereotyping of managerial positions, is an ugly reality that needs to be spoken about, and brought to change. Thus, accelerating progress on women's rights, and addressing women's issues would require more women in decision making positions and in policy making initiatives. Organizations should be backing calls for action against gender discriminatory company policies. Empowering and promoting women managers are intrinsic to achieving full institutional growth along with addressing the bottlenecks that deter women in their advancement. Organizations, in order to ensure women empowered workplaces, must regularly measure and assess policies and strategies to promote talented women at senior management positions.

5. Conclusion

Gender issues, in South Asia, have been evolved and shaped by the cultural, socio-economic, political factors and social movements in the region. In early societies, in the subcontinent, gender stratification existed but men and women had collective contributions to work and rights to resources. The cultural interventions and distortions due to centuries of invasions and the colonial past have also contributed to developing a parochial mind-set much in contrast with progressive Indian philosophical traditions (Kar & Tiwari, 2020). In India, 'starting from ancient times to modern management stories, there is no dearth of legendary narratives of women empowerment, extraordinary women leaders and philosophers' (Kar, 2019, p. 97) and administrators who overcame popular prejudices and barriers to bring qualitative changes in Indian social structures. The findings in the three country case analysis highlight how women managers are overcoming gender challenges and biases to access leadership positions in several fields including business, politics, academia and other areas. However, this dispersed progress does not undermine the challenges that women managers face both personally and professionally in these three countries. Further, accession of women managers to higher leadership roles is limited though Indian context is much better than other two countries. Even in Indian context, higher leadership role for women is much better in academics than other fields. Further, now-a-days media reports point towards women entrepreneurship which is also being recognised as a latent force to contribute towards economic growth of our country. However, there is still much to be achieved to bring about gender equality in the workplaces in all the country contexts studied.

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