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# **A Division of Labour in Society re-visited –in the light of gender and age role differentiations in post-industrial societies**

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Keywords: division of labour, ageing, gender, degeneration

## Introduction

Whimsy is tolerated and in many cases encouraged among the young. Among the elderly however, it is considered by consensus to be a good marker for incipient dementia. The expectation is that as we age we lose the fresh view of the world that is so endearing when displayed by infants. We are expected to display some degree of realism, often reflected as cynicism, which rather than endearing the subject to those with whom s/he interacts, sets up instead an interaction complex from which the subject may find it difficult to extricate her/himself. In some ways like Goffman's waitress, the older man is expected to adopt a role pre-cast for him (Goffman, 1967.). Unlike the waitress, it may be less of his choosing: he is often in react mode, whilst she sets the scene, and is therefore as first mover able to set up the rules of the interaction, within its narrow confines. The same would be true, more or less, in many social settings: nurses and 'orderlies' in hospitals, receptionists in hospitals and hotels alike, shop assistants and bank clerks now repackaged as 'customer service representatives', and so on. In Daniel Bell's terms (Bell, 1973), many if not most jobs in his prophetic post-industrial society could fit into a 'Brave New World' (Huxley, 1932) in some ways unrecognizable through the prism of Durkheim's vision of pre-modern Division of Labour. The roles accorded to each gender, and potentially each age cohort within each gender assignation, might overflow from a merely economic phenomenon, into what Goffman would consider a deeply entrenched and internalized self image, guiding if not determining manifold aspects of humanity's presentation of themselves on the many stages of daily life (Goffman, 1959).

Some of the gender and aging issues raised by humanity's technologically and organizationally-driven transformations are as follows: 1/ how does the older person get to preserve some of her/his 'joie de vivre' in this socially enforced straitjacket, which left unhindered may precipitate premature mental/emotional rigor mortis? 2/ how is a fast-transforming socioeconomic world order affecting power role differentiations based on age and gender? 3/ have targeting and exploitation, through a market system and pervasive marketing, radically transformed the contemporary division of labour?

Degeneration and ageing in humans –playing with pre-conceived notions

Many questions arise, e.g.:

Is it slow, gradual and relatively painless? A deterioration of sensory acuteness, a generalized blurring of each of the senses?

Or is it a sharp decline?

Is the degeneration precipitated by internal trigger mechanisms? (e.g. major disease)

Or by outside events? ('exogenous' - e.g. an accident).

Note how falls, whilst often labeled by the medical community as accidents, are in many cases connected to reduced sensory acuity (hearing, sight in particular), as well as (or more than?) reduced muscular strength; all of which are part of the natural degeneration process of ageing.

Mitigations

Whilst impossible to avoid in all circumstances, those succumbing to the degeneration process of ageing might expect in developed societies to have their specific concerns addressed in an increasingly comprehensive and sensitive manner, as societies cope with the demographic curve of an increasingly ageing proportion of the total population. For example, in the highly existential and practical spheres of tourism and transport, allowance for more time –to cross the road as pedestrian, for example - would save many 'accidents', injuries and fatalities.

From degeneracy to degeneration

How much does degenerate lifestyle precipitate premature degeneration? The culture of music has been replete with examples of polar extremes in this context: in the contemporary era:

a/ have the iconic 60s generation rock group, the Rolling Stones, as a well-known example, set up role models for their contemporary plus future generations, for a trajectory of pain and depression through abuse of drugs, soft and hard, and alcohol, leading to premature old age culminating in senility and death? The name of the group in itself tells of a particular perspective towards life's path, and implicitly, a set of values towards life's journey. Have the many other drug-related deaths of musical culture icons been associated with some sort of death-wish, associated with what might be labeled a 'degenerate' lifestyle –whether through overt suicide, or by accidental 'o/d-ing', or perhaps more commonly, by accelerated deterioration of body and mind? Perhaps the most famous recent example of issues surrounding the phenomenon of premature performer death would be that of Michael Jackson, but examples such as these would arguably represent the tip of the iceberg.

b/ By way of stark contrast, did Arthur Rubinstein's ability to render magical performances of Chopin, into his nineties, have to do with both an outer and an inner discipline of both body and mind, which enabled him to extend his creative and high-performing musical career for over a quarter of a century after the vast majority of persons have retired, either as required or, as is often the case, with a sigh of relief and a pension? Rubinstein was never portrayed as exhibiting a self-abusive lifestyle.

## How to define degeneracy

This is by no means an easy issue. Sammy Davis Junior was often seen chain-smoking – almost as a trade-mark he would be singing and simultaneously smoking 2 cigarettes at a time. He was arguably a pioneer of music and entertainment, and himself a Black Jew, in his era of anti-Black racism and virulent anti-Semitism. Did he smoke himself to death? In his era, smoking was not yet considered lethal by most of society. A generation or two later, mass opinion has changed, with regard to the medical effects of tobacco smoke. One is told to avoid second-hand smoking, an idea that would have been laughed at in the trenches of the two world wars, where cigarettes were often prized above food, and recognized and traded as precious currency surrogates. Heroin, however, was and is still, considered lethal. Edith Piaf was another super-star of Sammy Davis's generation, but the some-time darling of Europe, and of France in particular, unlike American Sammy Davis. She combined smoking with heroin, and her body caved in during her 40s, at less than half the age of Arthur Rubenstein. All 3 performers received huge acclaim in the music industry. Were Piaf's habits degenerate, compared to those of Sammy Davis? How important then is the social context, in time and space, in considering what is degenerate, what just an injurious habit? Should medical measurements alone define degeneracy? How much did Piaf's gender lead to her oppressed treatment in early childhood, leading to a street life style setting her up for chronic ill-health in her middle age?

## Issues of self-respect

Obsolescence of the skill sets and knowledge frameworks tends to squeeze older persons out of the labour market. This may lead to an encouraged or forced early retirement. The concomitant to that may be a reduction of one's conception of self-worth. This may hurt men more than women, to the extent that men have traditionally relied on the job status, particularly if high, as a major determinant of overall social status.

Adam Smith's faith in the 'invisible hand' of market forces is predicated on some meeting point supply and demand curves (Smith, 1776). If none exists, there is no market! Likewise his conception of division of labour, while differing in focus from Durkheim's, (Durkheim, 1893) still requires willing and able hands/brains to provide the person-power; and at the same time an economic system which has not had demand for labour decimated by the use of robots and artificial intelligence, both of which can be fabricated in such a way that their set of specialized 'skills' could far outstrip those of the classic assembly line worker, especially as depicted by Charlie Chaplin in his epic silent movie 'Modern Times' (Chaplin, 1936).

It is tempting to suggest that the economic system is the prime mover in this system, which pervades much of an older person's social life. How many sets of social interactions are triggered by economic motives? –older people can be "targeted" more conveniently as a market segment if their individual characteristics are ignored. Saul Bellow's *The Victim* resonates in this context (Bellow, 1947.)

Self-respect gives way to plain survival, in the context of the isolated old man, in an anomic urban environment.

Degeneracy leading to degeneration: observations of aging male tourists

A fresco from Thailand was played out daily at the breakfast buffet of a famous Bangkok 4-star hotel. The mini-drama could be conceptualized as “A Black Pearl”—occluded and occluding memory, with consequent substandard and degenerate living:

A Western man hobbled painfully out of the morning buffet, in a famous Bangkok 4-star Sukhumvit hotel. He weighed 200 kilo, or maybe more. He was supported by an Asian woman looking about one third his age, and about one quarter his weight. Dozens of other men, sitting alone, were still gorging themselves. One seated centrally was injecting himself through his stomach with a syringe kit, which he had placed on the shared breakfast table, displayed in front of everyone. Oblivious, he continued to amass more plates of mediocre-quality food, culminating in an enormous mound of white bread and a mountain of jam.

Many psychological, societal and economic questions arise from this short but daily repeated scenario:

- a/ what feelings were these older middle-aged men stuffing down? Do some of the issues of self-respect have bearing here?
- b/How quickly would they kill themselves in the process of over indulgence?
- c/How painful would that process be?
- d/Who would profit from their degeneration, from potentially functioning members of society, to targets of the dark side of tourism, the hospitality and the health and pseudo-health industries ? (i.e. the economic “credit side” of the equation)
- e/ How much more difficult would it be to estimate, let alone to quantify the losses: at a personal, individual level: sweet memories, a locking of eyes between strangers, intimate conversations –all lost in the tangled thicket of old, deeply suppressed memory banks, too painful to access in any ordinary way, and therefore stuffed down by gorging malnutritious food? (the “debit side” of the equation, always harder to quantify, and therefore so often neatly defined as “externalities”, and hence overlooked or justified to be totally ignorable, by economists and accountants).
- f/ How would one account for the imbalance in the ratio of older men to older women, both in the buffet breakfast, and, to a lesser degree in the hotel altogether, and as tourists in Bangkok in general?

Age-gender role differentials –collusions of the fashion and entertainment industries?

Image stereotypes have been compounded by both fashion and by entertainment. The obese old man can relatively easily conceal his corpulent disfigurement by donning the uniformly accepted standard attire of the suit, double breasted if necessary, together with appropriate shirt and tie, to complete the self-presentation. This would in most loci of middle-higher level strata of social and economic milieu insure acceptance, at least at the crucial initial stage of interaction. This is less universal in the entertainment ‘biz’, where standards of physical appearance may be more stringent, and veer towards higher levels of fitness –the ‘lean, mean look’ of the man is, if not a ubiquitous standard, at least one of the measuring rods of industrial acceptability. Curiously, it varies substantially from one society to another. In Latin America, for example, corpulent old men are still adulated as ‘pop stars’ for whose signature or even photograph together hundreds of young women will line up , as an act of homage to an acknowledged entertainment icon.

Women on the other hand have traditionally been expected to rely on their physical beauty, in order to aspire to higher social ranking, or to maintain that rank. In many though not all cases, and especially during the last few decades, this has meant succumbing to the fashion of the 'slim miss' stereotype, which has been accentuated and re-inforced by the apparel industry. "Miss Twiggy" was the model to whose body type most females were expected to aspire, and clothes were designed to emphasize this, in direct opposition to the all-concealing male suit. A brief perusal of Yahoo 'news' items appearing on a daily basis even into 2017 will attest to the amount of skin exposure expected of females, especially if they are part of the entertainment industry, compared to male counterparts. In summary, the fashion and entertainment industries appear to have found a happy collusion, if not a co-dependent relationship.

None of the social and economic constructs outlined above may have bearing on the biological differentiation of aging between the sexes. Women on average still outlive their male counterparts by a handsome, if diminishing, number of years. Single men tend to die earlier than married men; the reverse appears to be true of women. Thus the breakdown in the Durkheimian family division of labour, through a marked disintegration of long-term marriage or even coupling, seems to have favoured women, at least in the crude measurement proxy of longevity, at the expense of men! And this, despite the hype of the fashion and entertainment industries! Or perhaps, in a twist of irony to some extent because of them: obesity maybe more pronounced in the elderly Western male population than in the female cohort –to that extent –one cheer for Twiggy!

Julius Caesar, Adam Smith, Emile Durkheim and the evolution of their conceptions of division of labour.

At the turn of the Common Era, Rome ruled much of the 'known' world, from Asia Minor and much of the Mediterranean, to England and the North Sea. It was based according to the emperor's own words on the principle of 'divide and rule', not exactly an auspicious beginning for such an axiomatic concept (Caesar, 58 BC). Adam Smith (Smith, 1776) moved the concept out of the domain of politics and territorial conquests, into the economic domain. His description of the organization of a pin factory was both clear-sighted and clairvoyant. His thesis introduced new thinking, which evolved into our present science of economic theory, at a time when industrialization was about to explode. In so doing it was destined to overtake agriculture, small-holdings, cottage industries, and the expectation that women married, had up to 15 children through their child-bearing age span, and unless relatively well off also managed the family home; while the husband was expected to be the bread winner. While Smith, in identifying division of labour as a cornerstone, was concerned mostly about efficiency in the work place, Durkheim wrote a little over a century later (Durkheim 1893) about the happy conjunction of role differentiation, (his conception of the division of labour), in order to provide cohesion to family, to communities and ultimately to society as a whole. While in Durkheim's world one set of separate roles, demarcated or divided by gender, were ascribed to one gender, conversely, another set was ascribed to the other gender. Thus one set was able to provide the 'warp' to society, and the other its 'weft', to use the industrial metaphor of the omnipresent factory and hand loom. However, factory life and urbanization made the division of labour in the home increasingly obsolescent. The first world war may have represented untold misery to

the millions of males sent off to get maimed or killed, but in terms of female emancipation, and the breakdown of traditional, male-female work roles, it provided a giant leap forward, at least in the most industrialized protagonist nations, such as Britain, Canada, Germany and Russia. Due to the shortage of males at home, females got to operate machinery, to drive ambulances, even to manage!!

#### Undivided oases in the division of labour

Not all areas of social and economic activity succumb to the analysis sketched above. Two or three would seem to 'stay above the fray' –all in the arts. Music, both performance and composition, seems increasingly to have become both gender and age neutral, perhaps following a time-honoured tradition. Likewise writing can be thought of as providing a reasonably level playing field, both as regards age and gender, although some female writers might beg still to differ (Greer, Wolf,). Finally, art would seem to offer equality of opportunity, with regard to both age and gender, compared, for example to such sports-oriented vocations as wrestling, boxing and motor car racing. Perhaps in a generation or two, these comments will have to undergo modification too!

#### Conclusion

This essay has represented more of an introspection, unavoidably written from a male-centric viewpoint, on some of the implications of the division of labour, and how they have changed and continue so to do, as gender and aging roles are being re-written. It does not pretend to be a consummate piece of empirical research. The hope is that some of the theoretical issues presented have managed to raise some relevant questions for the future: especially as regards ageing and gender role differentiations in the post-industrial society in which we must now live.

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## **Active Engagement and Career Outcomes: An Exploratory Study of Latina Career Women**

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Of the research on work-life balance and on the challenges facing women in the workplace, few studies have focused on the impacts of professional business trade associations on career outcomes and the development of work-life balance strategies with a Latina population. This phenomenological study explores the life experiences of Latinas to understand the challenges they encounter in their careers and in their aspirations for career advancement. The study applied the life-story framework (Giele, 2008), which offered questions from the four life course dimensions. A question was added to this framework to explore the strategies that women employ to achieve work-life balance (Weber, 2011). Additionally, the study sought to obtain insight into how professional business trade associations, such as the Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA), facilitate forming relationships that create support systems and strategies for women.

The participants (15) were selected from career Latinas who are actively engaged in leadership roles within ALPFA. The findings indicate that they relied on family, mentors and networks. Career goals were driven by their family socioeconomic situation and family feelings about education. Active engagement in leadership roles is attributed to providing opportunities. Lastly, the women shared several strategies for coping with work-life balance.

# **Aligning Human Rights to Rectify Violence Against Women**

**Teagan Gahler**

## **Abstract**

This paper explores the issue of violence against women on the global scale, and if integration of women's rights in human rights would contribute to rectifying the situation. The scholarly articles explored in this paper highlight the past, present, and future state of violence against women in different areas of the world and the different policy approaches that have been taken thus far. This paper examines the feasibility of this shift and the impact a shift to the human rights approach would have on the status of women and the outcomes this would create.

*Keywords:* violence against women, human rights, women's rights

## Introduction

Gender violence is not a new phenomenon, it has continued through history in various capacities. Specifically, violence against women continues to prevail throughout all countries regardless of a country's economic and cultural status. The United Nations defines violence against women as “means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (pg.1). Violence against women can include the following: physical, sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual, or criminal abuse (Canadian Women, 2016). It can also include female mutilation, starvation, and torture (Bunch, 1990). The later forms of abuse are often seen in developing countries or rural areas within countries; for example India, and rural China both see high levels of these kinds of abuse against women.

The purpose of this exploratory paper is to discuss the positive impact on society if human rights would align directly with women's rights in the context of violence against this gender. There is documented recognition from the United Nations in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) identifying this as a problem that needs attention. However, this was published over ten years ago and the same problems still occur. As Bunch (1990) states “crimes such as these against any group other than women would be recognized as a civil and political emergency as well as a gross violation of the victims' humanity. Yet, despite a clear record of deaths and demonstrable abuse, women's rights are not commonly classified as human rights” (pg.486). Understanding why the disconnect occurs between women's rights and human rights will assist to inform the conversation.

## Global Perspective

Human rights can be defined as the rights one has just for being a human (Dembour, 2010). However, there are other approaches to the way people view human rights. For the purposes of this paper, I believe a brief overview of the different approaches is important to understand as violence against women varies drastically from one country to another. If people view human rights differently they will view the alignment of these rights differently based on the type and or location of violence. The different viewpoints of human rights are the “natural” approach - believing that these rights are given, “deliberative” scholars – believing that these rights are agreed upon, “protest” scholars – believe that these rights are fought for, and the “disclosure” approach – believe these rights are to be talked about (Dembour, 2010). The deliberative, protest, and disclosure approaches take away the overarching and standard protection individuals should receive. For example the deliberative approach believes different societies can adopt a certain set of rights, the protest approach thinks fighting back at what was already done serves this purpose, and finally the disclosure approach believes these are only an issue because humans talk about them and if everyone mutually agrees they should be adopted (Dembour, 2010).

Violence against women is not standardized, the variation and severity drastically changes from one country to another. Intimate partner violence is a main contributing factor to violence against women, however, there are other agents or cultural norms that contribute to violence as well. For example, in India the rape rates are alarming. Men in this country continue to rape women and young girls at their discretion for no reason, this is because women are still marginalized in this country (Arakali, 2015). The numbers show that “in 2014, 36,735 rapes were registered in India, according to the country's National Crime Records Bureau. Another 4,234 attempts to rape were recorded. Both are categorized under “Violent criminal offenses,” while another 132,939 “sexual offenses” were also recorded”

(Arakali, 2015). However in a developing country such as India, the unreported rapes would skyrocket this number, furthermore, there is not an effective support system to implement law and protect these women and young girls (Arakali, 2015). From a global perspective viewing this in any other human rights lenses other than the “natural approach” would perpetuate the system, as there is clearly not a solid vision or resources to change. India is a developing country that does not have the same structures and education system as a first world country. For comparison Canada is a first world country, with a strong legal, and educational system yet Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16 and approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2016). In turn, these increasingly strain women's shelters, law enforcement, hospitals, and the population and continually jeopardizes a gender in a country where equality is supposed to be prevalent.

The importance of women's human rights in relation to violence have been identified as priorities at the United Nations, and through their governing documents and statements, it is expected that members of the United Nations enforce these right into their local law. Each entity or state associated with the United Nation is diverse and will interpret this information differently (On, 2016). The current systems that are actually in action are trying to employ these human rights, but they are still based on women as a vulnerable entity under a patriarchal structure (On, 2016). For example, Ackerly & True (2008) explained that in Bangladesh, crimes against women including rape and severe violence; when reported, women are not encouraged to report these crimes and if they do they are not processed quickly. These crimes are technically illegal but they are not enforced as so, this puts women in a position of further inequality and uncertainty. These actions continue to put women at a societal disadvantage and place them as subordinates under the patriarchal framework.

To equalize the rights of women, it has to be included in all conversations about human rights. There is a global need to standardize these rights, and hopefully one day all persons will be treated equally regardless of their gender. As Johnstone (2006) points out

*“Women's human rights are the subject of a treaty of their own: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as such, they were considered by the Committee established under that treaty. However, women's human rights were absent from discussion by the other treaty bodies. This reinforced the idea that men's rights are universal and women's rights an afterthought” (pg.151).*

CEDAW and other committees, and agencies need to be taken seriously in regards to these issues, as they are the individuals that understand the need for change. Furthermore, these agents need to be included in human rights discussions across the board to stop this gender class system that continues well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Globally the human rights movement was able to make strides with the racial discrimination issues and violence towards these populations by making it a priority thus providing a recent example of the macro view of human rights at work. Women need to be present during these discussions and need to continue to champion legislation at the United Nations and through other global outlets to influence policy within respective countries.

### **Advantages of Integrating Human Rights and Women’s Rights**

The research displays that there is still the notion that women’s rights are lesser than men’s rights; human rights are placed in high importance however women’s rights are not on par with this topic. To use human rights as the catalyst to promote change women’s rights need to be held at the same level of importance as human rights. Bunch (1990) outlined four

steps to create an equal balance of power, while dated these four items have not been fully implemented in all current systems.

1. Women's rights as political and civil rights
2. Women's rights as socioeconomic rights
3. Women's rights and the law
4. Feminist transformation of human rights

(Bunch, 1990)

In theory, if these four points were achieved in conjunction with the United Nations it could be possible to have human rights law that also protects the best interest of women who experience violence regardless of their socio-economic status or culture. The advantages are clear in relation to Bunch's approach; women would have a solid groundwork in front of them to help navigate these issues, furthermore, they would be treated equally to men. Morgaine (2011) conducted a study interviewing participants about their experiences of domestic violence in the United States, with probing questions about how this can be fixed. Morgaine (2011) states in her conclusion "I found my position continued to shift, particularly related to the idea that, if developed and utilized critically, a human rights framework for DV and other antiviolen work in the United States might hold promise" (pg.24). In the European Union (EU) there has been substantial work on this issue, passing laws about gender equality, and lobbying for women's rights in relation to violence (Montoya, 2009). One of the participants in Morgaine's (2009) study expressed the need for the NGO's to work collaboratively to start change. The Daphne project in the EU is a model example of how this approach can be successful. The Daphne project was designed to distribute resources and band NGO's together (Montoya, 2009). There were over 200 Euros invested in this project and it ran until 2013. Montoya (2009) states "Daphne serves not only as a source of money for those organizations receiving funding but also as a source of information and expertise for all organizations committed to combating violence against women" (pg.340). The Daphne project is an effective strategy to help eliminate and manage violence against women, often it takes a community to solve these issues and implement human rights policy.

### **Impact on Women's Status**

The management of violence against women is just one part in creating equality for women. Women are subjected to different treatment regardless of equal employment or status programs. If women were not so readily targets of abuse they would be able to function in our global economic market creating an overall healthier culture. If women's rights were integrated into human rights legislation it would allow access to women in developing countries the ability to be educated, work and contribute to their local economy, be recognized for work in the home, and be able to reproduce without fear of consequence (unwomen, 2015). Empowering a gender to have equality creates raised status and in turn, positively impacts the way the world works.

### **Conclusion**

Human rights have come a long way since the 1990's when violence against women was identified as a priority to the United Nations to integrate into their policy. Over time advances have been made in specific countries depending on their socio-economic status and there have been shifts in policy. However, in countries where religion rules or resources are limited violence against women continues at alarming rates. The United Nations Women's organization has identified these issues and is committed to bringing policy together to rectify change. For this to happen there needs to be a movement of women in power who support

different pieces of legislation and work with human rights policy makers for complete integration. If this were to happen violence against women could start to be managed differently, if embedded as a basic natural human right. In turn, the status of women would start to shift creating a system of true gender equality without gender specific brutality. This would spur a positive economic impact, promotion of education, and healthier children.

The human rights movement towards ending violence against women will not happen in the immediate future. Through the readings and research outlined in this paper, displays the will for change and commitment from different organizations. This is the foundation of momentum to help create positive change in the future.

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**A-sanarte (self-healing) Hatha Yoga Practice in conjunction with Group Therapy for Domestic Violence Victims in Mexico** *(Work in progress)*

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## **Abstract**

A-sanarte (Self-Healing) is an exploratory project for social and research purposes, which has as a group of domestic violence victims as its recipients from Venustiano Carranza Municipality, México City. Our principal objective is to explore the effects of a Hatha Yoga practice in conjunction with group therapy for victims of domestic violence, considering four objectives: body, mind, soul and society. Our goal is to assist with the women's recovery, help with their reintegration into society and the acquisition of healthy lifestyles, using innovative techniques and therapy. The tools we have selected to incorporate in this population are the following: Regular Hatha Yoga classes and Group Therapy. These classes were designed and inspired by a Trauma Sensitive Yoga model, in conjunction with Group Therapy. The Hatha Yoga practice has demonstrated to be an effective tool for trauma healing, thus, through this project we are seeking to identify the benefits of this practice together with traditional intervention therapies, group therapy, in addition to a component of body awareness. The population selected is a group of 21 women between the ages of 18 to 60, all have identified themselves as domestic violence victims and are participants of the Comprehensive Care Center for Women “Hermila Galindo”, Delegation Venustiano Carranza, Mexico City. We have selected this space because it is one of the most recognized services of attention for domestic violence victims in the zone. Regarding this study, our intention is to continue the path of the explorations of the benefits of Yoga in a traumatized population in addition to integrating traditional intervention models with body- based therapy. We are also seeking the inclusion of individuals of various ethnic and socioeconomic groups as domestic violence victims and exploration of the intervention models for this population in Latin America, specifically in Mexico.

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## **Community based Health worker as a women entrepreneur, brings women empowerment and sustainable development**

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Affiliation with HANDS (**Health and Nutrition Development Society**)

**Abstract:****Background:**

Key economic indicators of rural women have been improved in Pakistan over the last two decades. But the rural remote access especially for women is still poor or outreach in most parts of the country. There is a significant gap in services and health indicators of urban and rural areas as reported by PDHS 2012-13 and MIC surveys 2014.

The major issues non empowerment of women because of lack of education and awareness about their rights. In rural settings there is a poor access in services, due to lack of proper road and transport system, non-availability of public health facilities and outreach program such as LHWs due to low literacy among girls and women, social barriers due to lack of awareness and discriminatory social norms that deprived women from participating in decision making and restricted mobility.

Gender program of HANDS introduced an entrepreneur sustainable model for the Marvis of villages to enhance their skills, competencies , contribute in services and income .This is a sustainable model in which once established setup for them in which they are selling, Social marketing products, medicines of common use ,general items (like pulses, rice, wheat, sugar etc.)And assets like sewing machine.

This is a sustainable model because Marvis are empowering because of having all useful things at door step in a rural context. Eventually they generate an income because of this model and supporting to their families. Besides that in this model all Marvis have taken sessions to developed their capacity on Gender, health & hygiene and enterprise trainings. It is a very effective entrepreneur model for sustainable development of women in rural context

**Introduction:**

Considering these socio-cultural, health and access issues, HANDS postulated as community based workers design to address these issues and bring local solution to initiate the social mobilization, improve the health coverage, bring behavioral change among men and women, and enhance women empowerment through skills development and setting entrepreneur models. HANDS initiated those interventions in district Umerkot, one of the remotest district in Sindh.

**Methodology:**

Conducted a series of third party baseline, mid-term and final assessments and evaluations. The final evaluation adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods. The respondents were the community women, men and Marvi workers.

This evaluation reviewed many of HANDS' project documents, including the results from a baseline and a mid-project quantitative survey, conducted a quantitative survey at end line (September 2013) and a qualitative assessment (December 2013-January 2014). The quantitative survey measured various health and social mobilization indicators, while the qualitative assessment sought to understand the changes that were measured. The quantitative survey included community respondents and Marvi workers of all geographical areas under Marvi workers and is therefore representative of the entire district.

## **Key Findings:**

A key finding was that Marvis driven by motivation (financial or idealistic) went beyond their assigned areas. As Marvis saturated clientele in their assigned areas, they sought newer ones in adjacent areas that were either covered by LHW or not covered by any healthcare provider. In doing so, they often sought out the poorer residents of these areas, whereas they have a slight wealth bias in their own areas. Most of the Marvi workers were low literate, average age around 28 years and married. Nearly half of them were doing some laborious work for supporting their family earning and earning was very meagre.

The evaluation depicted that most of the maternal and child health indicators are improved. CPR in Umerkot rose from 9% at the baseline to 27% at the end line, or a 3-fold increase and was higher in Marvi served areas. Community women ascribed both the higher demand and their own increased use of FP to the work of Marvis. Skilled births increased during the intervention from 32% to 41% (national average is 48%). They also work with some local doctors, to whom they referred complicated patients. Marvis had a more modest effect on the uptake of quality of the antenatal services.

Marvis had a more nuanced effect on postnatal care and vaccination of newborns. Breastfeeding was already high and remained at 67% at the end line; however, 92% reported feeding their newborns “colostrum”. Traditional practices of feeding newborns with local concoctions of water, sugar, and butter or honey have persisted. Vaccination rates were already high and remained in the 91-99% range. Clinically, Marvis had very modest-level medical skills, consistent with their educational level.

We found that the intervention has had a dramatic effect on Marvis at several levels. Their personal monthly incomes have quadrupled from around PKR 892 to 4724, while their household incomes have tripled from PKR 4829 to PKR 12362. Marvis are also more likely

to be decision-makers. They now participate in both minor and major financial household decisions and are the major decision-makers for health matters in their households.

The Marvis are more than just a professional advice and service provider- in many cases she is the friend and guide. For this, she is well respected by her community. In effect, a Marvi is a businesswoman who is helped by her family. She counsels about health, provides healthcare and health supplies and many of them also sell general supplies.

In conclusion, we found the Marvi intervention has helped improve some critical health indicators in Umerkot by creating a new cadre of health workers from uneducated rural women. The intervention has potential to bring some basic healthcare to impoverished communities. The foremost is that the Marvis worked on a commercial business model in which they worked for the profits they generated. This required some entrepreneurial skills and a considerable amount of hard work. Additionally the Marvi workers crafted the women empowerment through social mobilization and counseling at household level. Marvi workers played major role in decision making as a member of community organizations and became a role model for other women for participate in decision making at community level and then at family level. The social and local cultural norms accepted this women empowerment and resulted in enhance and improved mobility for women at least for their health concerns.

It is highly likely that this intervention can be replicated in the rest of Pakistan or even in the region; however, any such attempts must be flexible enough to adapt to local contexts/differences and allow some element of research to ensure that implementers are learning from their work experiences. In terms of replicating or extending this intervention, care must be taken to not lose the aspects that HANDS organization were instrumental in the success; these include attention to detail and close ownership of the intervention by the HANDS local district team. Community based Health worker as a women entrepreneur, brings women empowerment and sustainable development”

## **A. Background:**

Over last two decades there is some improvement and progress in maternal health and fertility indicators but the progress is slow, thereby Pakistan failed to achieve the targets as per government commitments. The Maternal health and newborn indicators are also not improved as expected over the last 15 years. Antenatal care coverage (for at least 4 times) is 48%, institutional deliveries are 60%, deliveries attended by skilled births attendants are 64%. The low birth weight infants are 29.4%, reflecting the poor nutritional and health status of the mothers due to frequent pregnancies.

In 2014, MICs survey Punjab revealed the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is estimated at 3.5 children per woman age 15-49 years, slightly higher in rural areas 3.7 as compared to urban 3.0. CPR is 39 percent, whereas the unmet need for contraception is 17 percent.

As is the case in many developing countries, a number of key health and development indicators in Pakistan can improve considerably. For example, the maternal mortality in Pakistan is around 276 per 100,000 live births, and infant mortality is around 78 per 1000 live births<sup>1</sup>. In fact many of these indicators are poor despite considerable macroeconomic growth; suggesting that this growth is skewed and many citizens are excluded from its benefits. For example, against a backdrop of high unmet need and low uptake of family planning in Pakistan as a whole – the national CPR is 35% and that for modern methods is 25% - CPR in rural areas is even lower at 31%<sup>2</sup>.

The major issues are the difficult access to quality care services, mainly due the unavailability of Public sector Health facilities, non-availability of LHW due low literacy among girls and women, social barriers curtailing the women mobility, their restricted role in decision making and poor socio-economic empowerment especially of the women.

In an effort to address this disparity, Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS), with the help of funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, developed an innovative model to provide health and development services in the extremely poor and remote district of Umerkot using local uneducated or poorly educated rural women as health outreach workers.

HANDS postulated that by training uneducated women in basic healthcare, entrepreneurship, Gender and outreach skills, along with complementary social mobilization of their communities, the overall development and health of communities in Umerkot would improve. The intervention started in 2008 with HANDS training the healthcare workers. Meanwhile, the healthcare workers – the Marvis – were paid a small stipend by HANDS, which they supplemented by selling medicines and health/family planning products to their clients. They were supposed to create a demand for their services with outreach and then provide these services. HANDS supported the Marvis with training and refresher courses, by ensuring supplies were not interrupted, and by handling issues and emergencies as they arose.

## **B. Introduction:**

### **The Context of the MARVI Intervention**

Pakistan lags behind its regional neighbors in many reproductive health indicators. Its CPR is 35% and only around half of all births are in a health facility or attended by a skilled attendant. Over the years, the Government of Pakistan has attempted to implement a number of initiatives - among which the Lady Health Worker Intervention has stood out as one of the most successful. In the first 7 years of its implementation from 1993 to 2000, the program contributed significantly to the national rise in CPR, from 12% to 30%. However, even though the government increased the number of LHWs to nearly 100,000, they did not reach the neediest of rural populations. This was in part due to the fact that these extremely poor communities simply did not have any women with a 10th grade or higher level of education,

which is a must for becoming a LHW. In order to address this deficiency, the Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS) conceived and implemented with support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, a model of working with un- or minimally educated rural women to serve their communities with family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH) services. These ladies were called the Marvi workers, and their work was complemented with the social mobilization of their communities. The project was initiated in the Umerkot District as of 2008.

### **The Marvi Intervention**

Health And Nutrition Development Society (HANDS) identified 350 selected villages from Umerkot that were not covered by LHWs. HANDS hypothesized that training uneducated rural women in basic healthcare, outreach and entrepreneurial skills; and supporting them with social mobilization of their communities can bring about significant changes in the health of their communities and empower these women.

A secondary goal was to empower the women from their communities with behavior change communication and social mobilization. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation provided the funding for the project.

The central concept of the Marvi model is centered on empowering local women (i.e. Marvi workers) and communities (i.e. women and their families) through capacity building to improve Reproductive Health (RH) and Family Planning (FP) outcomes with little dependence on external aid. The main philosophy behind the project was to promote the goals of economic empowerment of communities and improved reproductive health by a combination of social mobilization and a public health approach of providing health services via outreach and capacity building (the Marvi approach, done by the HANDS).

Initial screening surveys of villages were conducted for the selection of locations, Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs), and Village Development Organization (VDO) members were

carried-out in 600 locations. Ultimately, 350 locations were selected for intervention by the project committee. 350 MARVI workers were trained on RH and FP skills and competencies, which included creating demand in the communities for RH and FP coverage and social marketing skills of RH and FP products to sustain income generation. The project had already completed a baseline survey (2008) and a mid-project survey (2010). The evaluation used most of the indicators from the baseline survey.

### **The Objectives of the Marvi Project**

- Increase awareness and promote positive behaviors regarding reproductive health and family planning using social mobilization and micro finance programs.
- Increase access to essential RH & FP services through a saving and credit program.
- Improve quality of RH & FP services in selected public and private sectors of district.

### **C. Methodology:**

There is an acute dearth of participatory research on the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of reproductive health in Pakistan. This report is an effort to contribute to addressing some of this knowledge gap and to influence development thinking, policies, and practices of decision makers and program implementers for reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing the capacities of poor communities. This evaluation seeks to measure the outcomes of a key public health intervention in the context that it was implemented and seeks to explain why and how the intervention met its goals and how it may be replicated in other similar or diverse settings.

The assessment first randomly sampled communities from Umerkot district in the Sindh province of Pakistan for a quantitative survey. All communities were eligible for the study. The quantitative survey measured key indicators about reproductive health (including family planning), social mobilization and empowerment. This information was used to divide the

district into better and less well functioning areas in terms of key family planning indicators. These performance differences – and how they may have resulted from differences in communities, the work of Marvi workers and implementation quality - were then explored using qualitative methods.

## **RATIONALE OF THE MARVI EVALUATION STUDY**

The Evaluation was geared towards analyzing and documenting multiple aspects of the Marvi model in order to understand the efficacy of Marvi model for improving RH and FP uptake, the impact on community and the nexus of service delivery with social mobilization. The objectives of evaluation were to:

- To evaluate the social change model and the public health approach, along with their nexus
- What social capital was produced for the Marvi Workers (MW)
- To evaluate business and entrepreneurship model
- To identify how Marvi model can be sustained and scaled up.

## **EVALUATION STUDY HYPOTHESIS**

This new outreach based public health model (MARVI) complemented by social mobilization model has not only had a positive impact on the health and social capital building of Marvi and her community, but also provides evidence in support of empowerment of the two, which is essential for the sustainability of the project.

## **EVALUATION STUDY QUESTION**

1. What have been the relative contributions of Marvi and social mobilization models in increasing access, knowledge and quality of FP and RH facilities in the district of Umerkot?

2. Have the community members and Marvi workers been empowered enough to make the two models self-sustainable in the long run or is there sufficient evidence for the project to be scaled up to achieve that level of empowerment?

## **EVALUATION STUDY METHODOLOGY**

### **Overall Design**

The study used a 2 stage mixed method quantitative and qualitative research design. The primary data was collected through Household survey.

- The quantitative component that covered all villages of Umerkot
- A qualitative component including the use of ethnographic tools
- Skills assessment of Marvi Workers

### **Target Area:**

In order to understand the impact of the Marvi intervention the study included following geographical areas of Umerkot district:

- 1) Marvi villages
- 2) LHW covered villages
- 3) Completely un-served villages

## QUANTITATIVE SURVEY AND SKILLS ASSESSMENT

### Sampling Framework

The rationale for the quantitative survey was to measure program attributable differences across Umerkot which could then be evaluated in depth with qualitative methods. Thus the sampling frame for the survey was ALL of Umerkot. The total population of the district - from all 2184 villages in 28 union councils- was divided in multiple clusters based on villages or towns and a multi-stage stratified random-sampling technique was used to allocate weights to each cluster. In discussions, HANDS informed us that there are distinct areas of coverage between Marvi workers, LHWs and areas that are not covered by either. In the first stage 7 UCs were randomly identified. Additional stages included adjustment for provider type (LHW, Marvi or none; and for Marvis recruited during the first or the second phases) and weights (number of respondents recruited from each cluster) were based on the population of the village (based on data provided by HANDS).

Assuming

□: 0.05, □: 0

1690 households (each household to yield only one respondent); distributed as: 728 households served by Marvis, 728 served by LHW and 234 households covered by neither (Uncovered).

Selection criteria - All respondents were married women of reproductive age (MWRA). Within each household, only one respondent was interviewed. If more than 1 eligible respondent were found - the first woman encountered in that household was interviewed.

For Skills Assessment, 90 Marvi workers were identified based on those Marvis whose coverage areas were included in the quantitative survey. Besides questions assessing the knowledge and skill level of the Marvi workers, the questionnaires included standardized clinical vignettes, to assess their knowledge and practices. Instead of scoring as pass or fail, we analyzed answers given by Marvis for patterns to better understand their clinical practice patterns and sort of issues they emphasize.

### **Quantitative Study tools**

- 1- Structured questionnaire for community women (MWRA)
- 2- Structured questionnaire for Marvi workers including standardized vignette for Skills Assessment

*All tools were translated into Sindhi language*

### **D. Key Findings/ Results:**

A crucial factor that underlies the analysis of this report and is therefore a key to understanding the results is the social change and women empowerment determinants analysis. More interestingly, our results and discussions with Marvis helped us understand what motivates Marvis to go beyond their original allocation to cover other areas. For example, 353 respondents (21%) from LHW areas reported being served by Marvis alone. What is it about these locations or the business model that draw Marvis to them but not other.

The religious mix among Marvi workers is almost equal Hindus (48%) and Muslims (52%). There is linguistic make up as Sindhi is the predominant language spoken in the area (34%) followed by Dhatki (33%) and Urdu (12%).

On average Marvi workers are a mean of 32 years, while the mean age of community women (clients) is 28 years. The mean age at marriage for Marvis is 17 years with 43% Marvis getting married before 18 years. Their husbands are on average 34 years old. This likely reflects the fact that men and women are married early and hence all eligible prospects are of similar age when they are considered for marriage. The mean age of marriage was 18 years for community women and 27 years for the husbands. 79% of community women got married between 15-20 years, while 42% of respondents were married before reaching 18 years of age.

### **Educational Status**

79% of community women were illiterate and 17% having secondary level or less education. The education status of respondents' husbands were very different, while 53% were illiterate, 34% had education till secondary level while 13% had intermediate and above level education.

Marvi Workers generally have more formal schooling than community women. 17% of interviewed Marvi workers had received education till intermediate and 30% to only primary level education.

### **Financial Status**

Women actively participate in earning a living for their families along with men. They work in the fields, rear live stocks, make traditional sheets of appliqué and embroidery i.e. rillee. 81% of community households have one earning member followed by two earning members (12%).

Marvi workers, beside doing all this, provide health care services to the community and earn from selling the medicines in addition to the monthly salary they are receiving from HANDS.

67% of Marvi households have more than one earning members. The Mean monthly income in Marvis households was PKR 12362, while mean monthly income of Marvi workers is PKR 3091.

### **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: MARVIS' KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES**

Marvis practice what they promote: 36% of Marvis use some form of family planning—compared to 26% of their clients. Far more of Marvis use IUDs (27% vs. 1% clients) or injections (23% vs. 12% among their clients). Among the clients, the commonest methods were injections, pills and condoms – all that are sold/ provided by Marvis and lady health workers.

Generally Marvis have good knowledge about reproductive health and family planning issues. Almost all (99%) Marvis know about the modern methods of family planning and can distinguish between the permanent and short term methods.

Majority of Marvis have correct basic knowledge about ANC visits in 90% recognize that a women should have at least 4 ANC visits during her pregnancy and three delays contributing to maternal mortality. Almost all the Marvis were aware of all 3 delays that lead to increased maternal mortality. Extended labor pains, excessive vaginal bleeding and fits were three major complications identified by more than 90% of Marvis. Most of the Marvis have displayed the referral information at their clinics for the facilitation of clients. Nearly all Marvis are aware of the three most important components of neonatal care. 93% correctly identified that breastfeeding should begin within the first 2 hours after birth and 92% correctly identified that colostrum should be fed to the baby and that the first bath should be delayed for at least 6 hours after birth.

### **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: MARVIS' IMPACT**

To improve the outcome of pregnancy and delivery Marvis were trained to promote birth preparedness and increasing awareness regarding the danger signs. Since the main

consideration for most families is the financial burden of births, saving money was the main planning by all families. Selection of an attendant or a place of delivery were the next most common item and was somewhat higher among women served by Marvis.

Around 76% of the women reported availing at least one antenatal visit during their last pregnancy – an increase from 71% at the baseline. The frequency was the highest among women served by Marvis (>80%), particularly when they are served by Marvis and LHWs (94%).

Marvis were the main source of motivation for seeking medical advice for any antenatal and delivery complications as reported by 39% of community women. On an average a women went to a provider three times during pregnancy (mean:  $3.68 \pm 2.3$  SD) and 55% of these visits are to a Marvi; and 98% of these women reported that they were satisfied with the services and intended to avail them again.

### **Decision Making for ANC at Family and Community level:**

The decision to seek antenatal care was mostly a joint spousal decision. The joint decision making has increased since the baseline when it was only 68%. In the areas where Marvi and LHW both are working the reported joint decision making was highest at 84%.

Compared to the baseline, the proportion of home deliveries has decreased from 70% of all births to 53%. Most of this increase is in both public and private doctors, but 3% of deliveries are also being conducted by Marvis. In all facility births increased from 30% to 46%.

The CPR of Umerkot District, reported by baseline study was 9.3%. During the 5 year intervention period, the current CPR of the district has increased by nearly three-fold to 27%.

Almost all the community women (96%) reported breast feeding their last child. The mean time for initiation of breast feeding was  $2.51 \pm 3.27$  hours after delivery. 92% of respondents fed ‘Colostrum’ to the newborns. Women reported starting breastfeeding  $4.49 \pm 14.7$  days after delivery. Breast feeding was continued till age of  $11.83 \pm 10$  months.

94% of newborns had received vaccination at birth (usually BCG) as reported by the mothers.

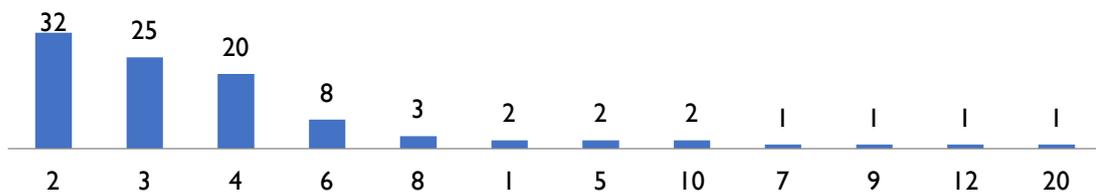
### BEING A MARVI WORKER

The main reason stated by Marvi workers of joining the intervention was to help other people followed by family persuasion. Most of the Marvis are illiterate. Nearly half (42%) of Marvis were unemployed before becoming Marvi workers. Among those who work, most participate in agriculture or farming. Almost half (48%) of the Marvi workers are doing part time work, with their Marvi responsibilities, as well.

### Job of Marvi Workers

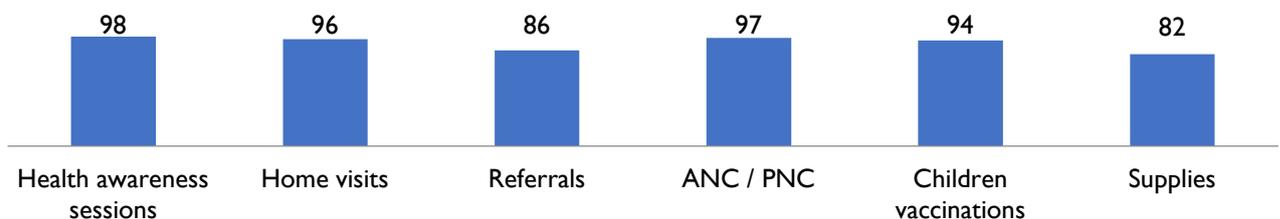
Almost 82% of Marvis have received 2 – 4 training/ refresher sessions. Each Marvi has attended at least 2 such sessions. 95% of the Marvis keep record of their services and supplies, which is in paper register PKR

Figure 1. Training Sessions Attended by MARVIs



Each Marvi served a mean of 300 households in a quarter. The most services provided include health awareness sessions (98% of all households), ANC/PNC checkups (97%), home visits (96%) and child vaccination (94%).

Figure 2. MARVIs Services by Household



## Economic Benefit to Marvi Work Leading to Empowerment

The Marvi intervention has proven economically beneficial for the workers. Prior to becoming a Marvi worker, these women earned on average PKR 892 (range: 0-5000). The average income of a Marvi worker now is PKR 1905 (range: 1100-15000). However, since becoming a Marvi, she has become entrepreneurial enough to develop other sources of income and earns on average PKR 4724 (range 500-25000) per month. This means that her overall income has essentially increased 5 fold and that her Marvi earnings account for only a third of her total income.

The facilitation effect is also seen on the household in general. While not only is the Marvi contributing towards her household's income, other income for the household (usually her husband's earnings) has also nearly doubled. This is a very interesting phenomenon and needs to be explored further.

A key measure of a Marvi worker's empowerment is how she productively she uses the money she earns. A large portion of this money is spent recreation (80%), followed by food (60%) and children's education (36%). The pattern suggests that the extra income has allowed a Marvi the means to spend on her own priorities (i.e. wellbeing) and has also given her the independence to do so.

Figure. Marvi Workers' Income

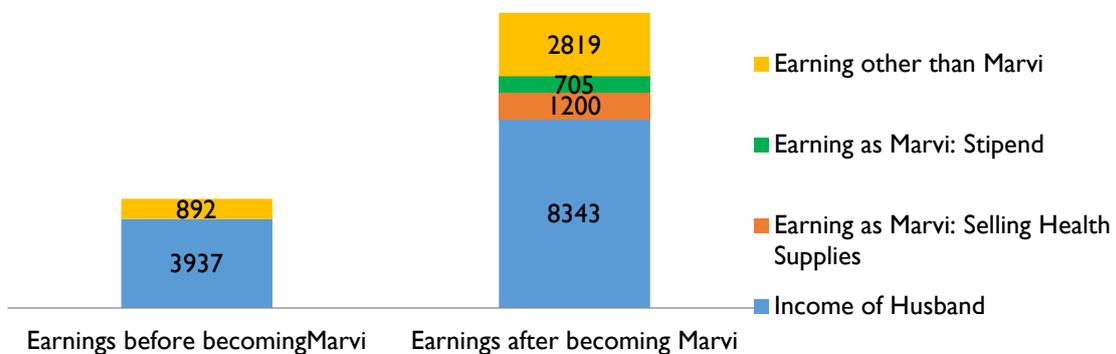
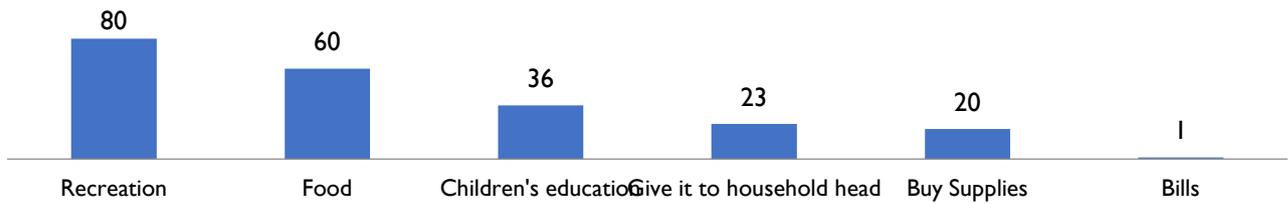


Figure. Uses of the Additional Income by Marvis



### **SOCIAL MOBILIZATION and Community Participation**

Approximately 45% of community households were members of community organization that facilitate work for their communities. Over the past 5 years, the overall communities' participation in Community Based Organizations (CBOs) has increased. This may reflect the fact that the HANDS' social mobilization has successfully progressed and established in the consciousness of the local community as a "worthwhile thing".

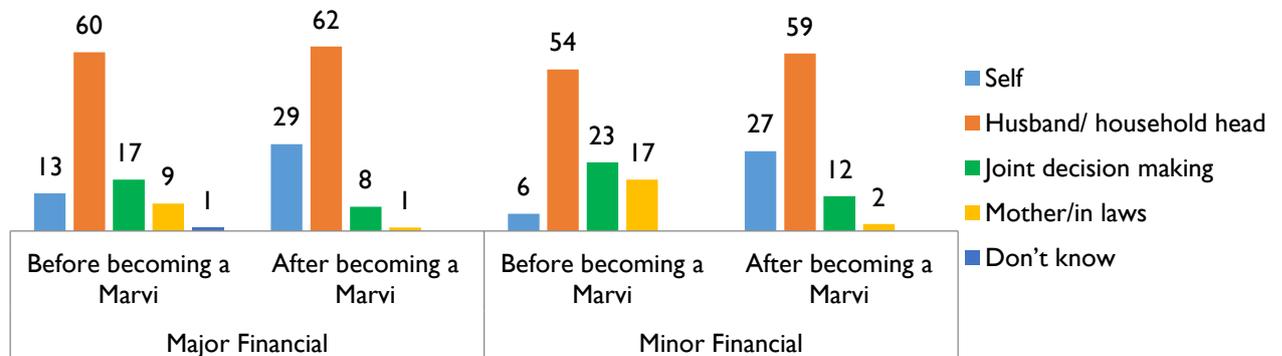
75% of Marvi workers were members of some community organization and majority of Marvis (81%) were actively involved with the community organizations. Most of the Marvi workers led the decision making process in the community meetings while 38% actively voiced their opinion during decision making process. Most community women feel that they (or their household members) will contribute time (> 90%) or money (80-90%) to CBOs even if they don't immediately benefit from it, suggesting that they perceive a long term benefit from involvement.

### **Role of MARVIs in Women EMPOWERMENT**

Becoming a Marvi worker has been empowering for the women. A marked change is reported in the financial decision making trend before and after becoming a Marvi worker. Decision making about minor daily household expenditures have increased from 30% to 38%, while the self-decision making regarding major financial matters has increased by more than four times (from 29% to 39%). Most of the gains of the Marvis have actually come from

autonomy taken over from their mothers in law. The role of husbands seems to have remained unchanged.

Figure. Financial Decision Making for Marvis



Involvement in decision making is even more pronounced in the areas closer to Marvis’ areas of training and expertise i.e. health, reproductive health and family planning – where the role of husbands in the FP decision has diminished (from 46% to 32%). Although the overall decision making remains with the husbands and heads of households but in the decision making in all the matters from choosing the health care providers, to restricting family size and spacing to the choice of family planning methods, the authority of Marvi workers has increased up to four-fold.

For most part, decisions are made by the husband and wife and are not directly influenced by the in-laws or other family members. However, family women share chores and give opinions about daily household activities – mostly minor decisions are already the exclusive domain of the women.

When women earn an income (Marvi workers or community women), they often spend the money earned, according to their “choice” (i.e. “marzi”). In fact, much of the extra income of women was spent buying additional food for their family and education for the children and when possible towards savings. However when savings accrue, they are meant to have

some “available funds” in hand for any cultural, religious and traditional events or for emergencies that come along. Many of the women mentioned that they don’t turn over their incomes to their husbands.

Marvis have put in considerable effort to establish their place in their area as a person, worker and healthcare provider. The strategies followed by them in making this happen include inclusivity, quality services, ensuring that they are present when the community needs them and having services and commodity available.

There is a marked realization of monetary as well as non-monetary benefits of Marvis’ services. The community is appreciative of their presence and facilitation that it has brought to their lives. Marvis has proved to be source of great comfort and guidance for their communities, who also help them in their difficult times.

As a person, the Marvi is seen as an empowered woman who can take household decisions which she couldn’t prior to becoming MARVI. While she is certainly changing many traditional paradigms – including that of a decision making woman who sometimes even counsels and advises men and the community as a whole – the overall perception is that she does all of this within the bounds and norms of the traditions that her community follows.

Most of the Marvis feel that their work as a Marvi has raised their social status and respect in their community. People perceive Marvi as a respected member of the community by calling her Bajji (elder sister) and recognize her importance as a healthcare provider by calling her “madam” or even “doctor”.

Marvis have been a key source of information for both men and women. Although they started by counseling women, they are trusted enough now that even men listen to their advice. The key means of communication is face to face counseling,

Marvi provide information regarding health to community, making them better aware of health related issues. Among her efforts she also counsel even men from the community,

many of whom told us that they now feel the need and importance of MNCH. Interestingly, as she raises awareness about FP, safe births and child health, she also helps herself by developing a market and demand for her services. This helps raise her income and therefore the chances that she will continue her work in the community and will ultimately prove contribute to the sustainability of this intervention.

Secondly, a good Marvi is an agent of change in her community. She is self-motivated and feels her responsibility to change and improve her community. As seen earlier, they often become the change they want to inculcate and practice what they teach.

Thus, most see their roles in bringing change both at household and at the community level.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

### **Empowerment of Marvi Workers as a Change Agent**

We assessed Marvis' empowerment based on the definition proposed by the United Nations: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Marvis are empowered as seen by the fact that they are making household and reproductive health decisions in her own household, steps out of her house for her work and is seen as an opinion leader by women of her community. Her husband usually helps her business and she often experiments with her business model to enhance her income. We also found that in locations where the Marvi is highly motivated and empowered, positive changes are visible in the community's behavior as well.

## **Marvis' Business Model**

The Marvi is essentially a household business. Her income includes a fixed stipend from HANDS, profits from selling medical products such as family planning supplies, iodized salt and ORS to her clients and by selling grocery and general supplies from the shop that she maintains in her home. Her family participates in the business model. The husband and older children help in record keeping– as most Marvis are illiterate. They also help with supplies and procurement. The whole family helps to market the services and takes turns to “man” the shop. Many members of Marvis' family also belong to health related occupations. For e.g., husbands or brothers of some Marvis are dispensers or vaccinators; other Marvis are related to TBAs. All of these serve to increase the credibility and acceptability of the Marvi in her community.

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# Critical Analysis of the Role of Microfinance in Meeting Strategic Interests of Rural Women in Bangladesh

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## ***Abstract***

The paper addresses the importance of achieving women strategic gender needs as opposed to merely meeting their basic needs. Though strategic gender needs meet the issues of enabling women to become agents of their own future, strategic gender needs are abstract and less easily identified than practical gender needs. The paper attempts to analyse the extent of meeting women strategic interests through microcredit programs in rural Bangladesh. It also examines how the Government policies and Non-Government programs address the obstacles towards transforming women's status in every quadrant of institutions: household, community, market and state. In doing so, the paper will use Kabeer's institutional dynamics to provide an insight into why micro credit is effective or ineffective from two points of view. First, this paper interrogates the strategies of Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) in Bangladesh in addressing women strategic interests by facilitating small credit. Finally, it will analyse how institutional forces in Bangladesh hinder the potential of microcredit to actually achieve women's sustainable empowerment . It will review the literature and study women's real life cases as secondary data to examine the discourses in gender equity and social justice and their policy implications in the following institutions: family and community. The main argument of the paper is that Financial services improve women's control over resources and women's bargaining power in the household but Focusing the way in which women are suppressed through social rules, norms, practices can improve women's self-confidence and life chances sustainably. It concludes with the assertion that gender aware transformative policies and programming with education, training and community development can yield both women's practical needs and strategic benefits.

## **Keywords**

Women Practical needs, Gender Strategic Interests, life chances, Microfinance, Social Institutions .

## Critical Analysis of the Role of Microfinance in Meeting Strategic Interests of Rural Women in Bangladesh

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### Introduction

The paper addresses the importance of achieving women strategic gender needs as opposed to merely meeting their basic needs. In policy terms, women strategic needs are defined as the interests that arise because of gender discrimination and women subordinate position compare to men. And, basic needs relate to women's traditional gender roles and responsibilities which is practical in nature (Moser, 1984). Strategic gender needs are abstract and less easily identified than practical gender needs. But strategic gender needs address the issues of empowering women, as a group compared to achieve the following needs, for example: a) equal access to resources and benefits, b) equal rights in laws and policies and, c) equal wages and control over their earnings and expenditures.

Thus, policy approaches to empower women need to focus on enabling women to become agents of their own future. In Bangladesh, women continue to experience a long history of exploitation based on unequal power relationships and gender discrimination especially in rural areas (Hashemi, 1996). It is estimated<sup>1</sup> that women control as little as two percent of the land in Bangladesh and women hold only 69 seats of 350 constituency-based seats in parliament. It is noticeable that 50 of 69 are reserved seats. So, women parliamentarians are marginalized from acquiring core skills and decisions because of their appointed nature. Again, Women in rural area live in poor, insecure households in which their life chances to utilize agency is too limited. Though kinship in households and family networks are the primary sites, there are a range of institutions: market, community, state, where gender relations and inequalities are reproduced over the years (Kabeer, 1999, p12). It has been argued that In Bangladesh, microcredit as a financial service is empowering women economically by improving their control over resources, bargaining power in the household and self-confidence (Kabeer,2005). On the other hand focusing the way in which women are suppressed through social rules, norms, practices can meet women's strategic interests, long-term ends that transform women's position (Apushigah, 2004). However, the Government policies and Non-Government programs along with financial services need to address the obstacles towards transforming women's status in every quadrant of institutions: household, community, market and state.

Hence, the paper attempts to analyse the extent of meeting women strategic interests through microcredit programs in rural Bangladesh. In doing so, the paper will use Kabeer's institutional dynamics to provide an insight into why micro credit is effective or ineffective from two points of view. First, this paper interrogates the strategies of Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) in Bangladesh in addressing women strategic interests by facilitating small credit. Finally, it will analyse how institutional forces in Bangladesh hinder the potential of microcredit to actually achieve women's sustainable empowerment. It will study women's real life cases as secondary data to examine the discourses in gender equity and social justice and their policy implications in the domestic and community institution. It concludes with the assertion that gender aware transformative policies and programming with education, training and community development can yield both women's practical needs and strategic benefits.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.cipe.org/blog/2013/08/28/property-rights-and-womens-economic-participation-in-bangladesh/#.Uo15m-KbHYM>

## Gender strategic interests and power concept

Advocating initiatives to address women's strategic interests beyond addressing practical needs is not usually a policy aspiration in a developing country such as Bangladesh where women are struggling to ensure their basic needs every day, such as finding food or cloths or to improve their reproductive basic rights. so, meeting gender strategic needs is more relevant for developing countries like Bangladesh than for any developed countries because the institutional structure for empowering women such as family beliefs for women's productive role, social views for women's advancement in employment or market and state laws for women's protection are still very backward and traditional. For instance, people still believe that an educated women might perform as a successful mother in future rather than believing that if women are well-educated, self-esteemed and empowered they, as healthy citizens, can not only help the entire family but also can serve the whole nations. More importantly, emphasis on practical needs working on strategic benefits only serves to perpetuate rather than yield progress in empowering women on a sustainable basis in Bangladesh where patriarchy is deep-seated. Kabeer differentiates practical gender needs and strategic interests as a result of the asymmetrical gender division of resources and responsibilities, and as a result of subordinate position of women in compare to men. She frames strategic interests as 'a product of the underlying structural inequalities which give rise to these needs' (Kabeer, 1999, p27). Meeting strategic gender needs not only helps women to achieve greater equality but also changes existing role within all institutions they are in. Naila Kabeer suggests that 'empowerment ... refers to the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability' (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). This definition makes clear that only those previously denied such abilities can be considered to be empowered and also that the choices in question are strategic. Kabeer defines strategic choices as ones 'which are critical for people to live the lives they want (such as choice of livelihood, whether and who to marry, whether to have children etc)' as opposed to 'less consequential choices which may be important for the quality of one's life but do not constitute its defining parameters' (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). To research how, why and by whom women have been disempowered for years it is then important to understand the power relation of women not necessarily with men but with all their counterparts regardless of men and women especially in context of rural Bangladesh. Moreover, power concept in rural area has a more concrete and complex picture. The target women are not only suppressed by men but also by other women. In patriarchies women often act on behalf of men. Right now, most women do not have this power in institutions, because the community and state has not prioritized creating an environment in which women can do these things. Kabeer pointed out that women are all constrained by 'the norms, beliefs, customs and values through which societies differentiate between women and men' (Kabeer, 2000, p. 22). Many worry about that it is to increase the power of women will decrease the power that men have. But the fact is that women are subordinate in power relation to men in all institutions in which they are formulated and so, that is all for equality, not by the cost of men's power. When we are concern of empowering women then we consider them currently disempowered i.e. they are disadvantaged by the way power relations presently shape their choices, opportunities and well-being.

The power concept can be explained in two senses. In one sense, power is concentrated in those hands that are positioned and authorized for making decisions about resources. In another sense, power is exercised by those who are able to mobilize these resources (Kabeer, 1999). In Bangladesh men are favoured and recognised for both sense. There are four mutually interdependent factors: economic setting, political organization, legal system, and Ideology and religion often cocoon women. Women's powerlessness in Bangladesh is a

consequence of the existing patriarchal social system which determines the power relation within household and bargaining power of household members through the organization of family, kinship and marriage, inheritance patterns, gender segregation and associated ideologies. This backward state is also a product of women's illiteracy, lack of awareness, poor knowledge and skills, lack of self-esteem and confidence (Parveen, 2007).

### The myth of microfinance in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the concept of microfinance was developed in 1976 by Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi economist, as a means of alleviation poverty and improving the lives of the very poorest inhabitants in Bangladesh (Grameen Bank, 2012). The 2006 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Muhammad Yunus (and Grameen Bank) for pioneering the idea of microcredit and setting up the Grameen Bank, a microfinance institution (MFI) in Bangladesh. Microfinance is a provision of a range of the poor's financial needs including credit, savings, insurance, remittance management etc. Microcredit is a provision of small scale loans to the poor who are disadvantaged and suppressed. MFIs provide some non-financial services too such as skill training, marketing, organizational support, education and health. Microcredit concept has been evolved with the expectation that it will provide a certain amount of money to women to remotest area to improve their living standard and to empower them by themselves. There are a number of microcredit organizations are in action in Bangladesh. The most popular are GB, BRAC, Proshika, Bees, ASA. Basically women start small enterprises such as dairy raising, poultry rearing, petty business, handicrafts, tailoring, daily hawkers and so on by lending money. The critics of NGO activities argue that because of the patriarchal social structure of rural Bangladesh micro-credit does not necessarily lead to women's empowerment, it might even worsen their situation (Goetz and Sen Gupta, 1996:61, Greenhalgh, 1991:31). The discrimination and inequity to disbursing credit amongst women as per their ability to pay back are also observed in providers' policies. "If programs wish to empower women, they should be grounded in a clear conceptualization of empowerment, rather than assuming that programs are empowering" (Ali &Hatta,2012).

### Kabeer's institutional dynamics as a key theoretical concept

The Social Relation Approach, developed by Naila Kabeer is intended as a method of analysing existing gender inequalities in the distribution of resources, responsibilities, and power, and for designing policies and programs which enable women to be agents of their own development. The framework uses concepts rather than tools to concentrate on the relationships between people and their relationship to resources and activities- and how these are re-worked through 'institutions' such as the family, community, state or market.

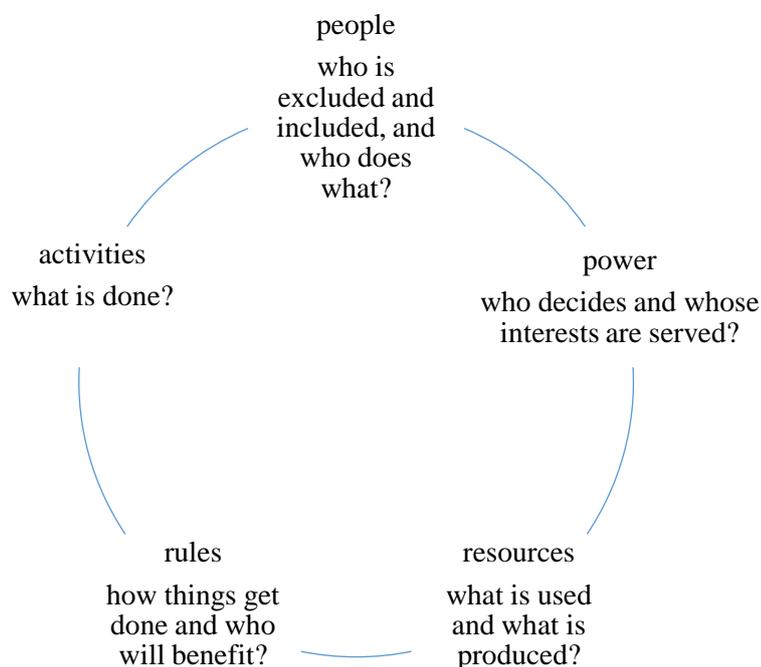
Table1: Quadrant of Institutions

Key institutional location	Structural form	Official ideology
Family	Household, extended family	Altruism, co-operative, non-conflictual
Community	Village tribunals, informal network, NGOs	Service provision
Market	Financial corporation	Profit maximization
State	Legal, military, administrative organization, local government	The national interest and national well-fare

Source: Adapted from NailaKabeer, 1999

Having analysed a number of studies of women’s empowerment, Kabeer goes on to argue that the ability to exercise such choice is made up of three interrelated and indivisible elements—resources, agency and achievements—all of which need attention before assertions about empowerment can be made. Resources are identified as not only material but also human and social and as including future claims and expectations as well as actual allocations. Access to such resources will ‘reflect the rules and norms which govern distribution and exchange in different institutional areas’ (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). Agency is the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them. As well as observable action it includes an individual’s sense of agency (or power within). Usually thought of as ‘decision-making’, agency can also involve ‘bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance’ (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438).

**Fig. 2:** Five aspects of social relations shared by institutions



**Source:** Adapted from Kabeer.N, 1999 (p14,15)<sup>2</sup>.

### The extent to which women have access to power in domestic sphere

In Bangladesh gender inequalities are social construction and have been reaped in household first. Family beliefs and social views, on the basis of reproductive status, have particularized the role of men and women in two very different categories. On the one hand men have been treated as superior position and acted as earning and resource mobilizing role, on the other hand, women have been automatically fell into subordinate position to serving and rearing the other members. As Kabeer's quote "Caste, ethnicity and religion exacerbate the economic dimensions of poverty and vulnerability through processes of cultural devaluation which assign certain groups of people a lower position in the social hierarchy" (Kabeer, 2005,p4710). Though microfinance organizations in Bangladesh have been criticized for

<sup>2</sup>The common norms, beliefs and values across the different institutions are used in order to understand women relationships with their counterparts over the institutions.

unsuccessful credit programs due to very less amount (equivalent to \$111) of credit flow and strict provision of repayment money with high and compound interest rates, patriarchy structure of institutions and women's lack of numeracy are the crucial reasons for which women sink into the cycle of debt. In traditional family structure women are assigned to do all household works including caring and rearing other family members and children. In these circumstances to start own business and enter into public sphere without hand increase women's workload enormously. For men, helping women is considered shame to their masculine. Another form of negative impact is that women have no control over their credit; they just pass the money to their male counterparts, sometimes willingly but mostly on pressure. In poorer rural family where men are unable to earn the 'bread' and addicted of alcohol, lustrous out world, this money can be turned into the cause of domestic violence. They misuse the money and abandon to repay the money cause women into deep debt. As a result poor women become poorer and children are to be forced to take workload on the cost of their schooling. There are pitfalls that micro-creditors have learned about as they have gotten more sophisticated. At a 1998 campaign conference, Helen Todd, editor of CASHPOR, a network of Grameen Bank replications, told of going to the home of a woman in Nepal who had borrowed to develop her grocery business. "As soon as I started asking questions about the grocery business the husband made all the answers." Todd said. Todd followed the woman into the house, and she started crying. It turns out that not only had the husband taken over the business; he had also taken a second wife. Todd is convinced that most successful borrowers were "those husbands and wives working in partnership". (<http://www.grameeninfo.org/dialogue/dialogue40/cover.htm>)

It has been argued that borrower women are more powerful in household decision making regarding children education or marriage. There has been a proliferation that women financial participation is the reason for higher divorce rate. Dowry is another form of oppression towards women. One field worker in Goetz & Gupta(1996) study make a direct connection between dowry and credit by saying that, "Actually, it (credit) is just another form of dowry" (p10). A central claim and goal of many MFIs is to empower women and promote gender equality by elevating women's status in household decision making. However, while women were certainly the primary targets of MFI programs, women were more often conduits to, rather than end users of, credit. As one respondent told us, "Women take microcredit as their husbands order them to do so. When their husbands fail to pay the instalment, then NGO workers abuse the women a lot. Women have to bear the pressure coming from both sides. Another respondent from Arampur takes 25000tk (\$360) loan whereas she earns only 100 tk(\$1.2) to pay dowry for her daughter's marriage. (<http://www.foodfirst.org/files/pdf/bgr%20microcredit%20winter%202008.pdf>).

"Women can assume empowerment at community... if they can raise their status in society; increase their ability to participate in community meeting" (Al-Amin, Hossain & Mathbor, 2013,p114).

A common form of microfinance collateral is social capital. Social capital collateral refers to the assurance of consistent payments through peer pressure and group solidarity in the customer's network. For example, in microcredit, social capital collateral is usually created through the group lending approach. Under group lending, each individual borrower is responsible for their own loan repayments and also other group members' loan repayments. In the case of women-led commercial activities, the power of social capital collateral did not succeed. Instead, the collateral strained the female customers' network. This was because the sole profit generating objective of commercial activities. The study concurs in finding an

increase in social capital among women participants leading to practical collective action against injustices (Kabeer ,2011).

Microcredit programs encourage women's mobility from very private household sphere to public community sphere through group lending process. So, women can communicate and share their views about fertility, contraceptive use, family coalition and relationship, children health, women power and position, experiences with people outside of family and keens which is challenging to traditional norms and customs (Kabeer, 2008). On the contrary study conducted by Al-Amin (2013) contradict with this argument by stating that women do not get scope to share experiences rather sitting blank on repayment meeting. Women are learned at home not to share home matters with strangers. Moreover, Community and society do not support them too if they ask any assistance from outsiders. It is a matter of shame.

Patriarchal Bangladeshi society constructs inferiority inside women from their very childhood that they are responsible for all their failure. This inferiority is not necessarily in relation to men but to other women surrounding them because they are always being compared negatively to other women in the community. For example, if a woman is victimised in domestic violence, it is her fault. Or if her husband is addicted to alcohol or involve in extra marital affair, it is her discredit that she could not control and entertain her husband properly. Moreover, women keep criticizing a woman which is very disappointing. This practice tends to isolate women from their own family support networks and create competition rather than solidarity between them (Rozario, 2004). In this circumstances when women lend money in a group they fail to create a network. Even, if any member fails to repay in time due to her husband's fault, she will be blamed and the community or group members are not going to support her. So, she fell into more vulnerable and isolated position. However, study of various MFIs report reveals that women borrower can expand network through informal social capital. For instance, one borrower started tailoring business with credit and recruited her group members. Again, her customers are mostly from group members and their keens. So, they are helping and supporting each other which is corresponds to Putnum's (1995) bridging social capital.

### Meeting strategic interests through microcredit

#### Case study 1: A more successful story of 'Munni'

This is a case study that demonstrates an example of more sustainable empowerment because both strategic and practical needs have been met to a satisfactory extent. Strategic needs are the ability of women to empower themselves to achieve goals. Basic needs are merely to meet survival and immediate needs. This case study demonstrates that the woman was able to run her own business, control her own finances and to have a decision making at the household level. She could able to build her capacity on market mechanism by receiving basic education and skill training on production and marketing. But, she did not have a voice in the wider community because of traditional patriarchy beliefs and lack of community development.

Akhter Begum Munni sits with a warm smile and her healthy little baby radiating success. Munni Akhter along with her husband owns and runs Tumpa biscuit factory where they make 'moa' a local type of biscuit. It all began in 1988 when they used to make biscuits by hand. In 2006, she joined 'Devi' scheme, a small scale of microcredit run by BRAC for small and poor entrepreneurs, and took out of 5000 taka equivalent to \$60 for materials for making biscuits. In 2008, she applied for 'progoti' scheme, a medium scale microcredit and was granted of a loan of 100,000 taka to put machinery for her factory. She will soon take her last loan

500,000 taka to expand and invest in better faster machinery. After taking first term loan she has received skill development training in production and marketing.

Today, her biscuit factory is continuously expanding to meet a high demand with a huge increase in production. Munni and her husband's income have high rocketed to 150,000 taka a month and now they are selling their biscuits all over Bangladesh. They have expanded to beyond anything they could have imagined. Munnisays, "I have always had potentials dreamt of living a better life. BRAC has been a helping hand in achieving this it".([www.brac.com.bd/publications/annual report 2011-2012](http://www.brac.com.bd/publications/annual_report_2011-2012)).

#### Case study 2. An unsuccessful story of 'Shefali'

I met a woman borrower who shared her credit experiences with me. I tried to draw a story on the basis of her comments. Although household had further funding as a result of the microcredit, it did not result in any change to the extent to which the woman was able to make decision or show personal agency because she had no control over the finances that were borrowed. She was only the medium of credit flow. Hence this credit facility could not change her conditions as well as position.

She said, 'Due to the financial crisis of the family I took loan from samitee (MFI) and bought a CNG (Auto Rickshaw) for my husband. He is running the family by the income he earns by driving the CNG. He just gives the amount in my hand at the end of the month for the repayment and I accordingly do so. I have no control over my loan and income. So, why he will care about my decision and how do you think that I am getting more power in the family through involvement in microcredit program?' - stated by one microcredit borrower, Shefali Akhter lived inKhejurtalk village under Savar district. I got the opportunity to interview her during myvillage study on 3rd October to 7th October in 2007. Though my study area was 'the impact of education on social and economic status of rural women, Shefali was microcredit borrower and shared her experiences with me.

Shefali had a joint family including husband, in laws and three children. She decided to enrol her elder daughter in primary school. Her family supported her as she was the money lender of the family. But, after two years her family decided to get marry her daughter, was only eleven years old. Her husband sold his auto-rickshaw and paid dowry in the marriage. Shefali was against the decision. She wanted to continue her daughter's education and save the auto rickshaw- the only income source of the family. As Shefali said' I am not the end user of my loan and I have the most sub-ordinate position in my family as I am daughter-in-law. They (family) think I cannotmanage my money. Only thing I can do is to cook food for the whole family.' The then circumstance in 2007 was very vulnerable. Her daughter was back to the paternal house due to the dilemma of early age marriage and her financial provider kept pressuring to repay the instalments of the loan as her husband was abandoned.

### **Finding and Analysis**

The findings from literature review and the case studies give the perception that women's involvement in financial activities is playing an important role in improving women's life-chances. Khandakar (2005, p34) finds in his comprehensive study that, "strong evidence that the programs help the poor through consumption smoothing and asset building" and that "microfinance helps women acquire assets of their own". This improvement does not last long. Because, microfinance organizations identified liquidity problem as the core reason for women disempowerment. They limited their approach to the provision of credit: the credit minimalist approach (Hulme& Moore, 2006). Women's powerlessness is a result of complex hegemony caused by institutional conservatism: family beliefs, social views and state's

inadequate weak law. Kabeer's structure (1999) argues that how a financial service is delivered is equally important to who is being targeted. The MFIs success is based on the cost of failure to address this patriarchy structure. Moreover, some NGOs like Nijera Kori is committed to move for social awareness-building and mobilisation against instances of injustice and barriers of access to public entitlements- without recourse to providing microcredit (Kabeer, 2002). A most important consensus has been come out from the scrutiny of practitioners and scholars that MFIs movements cause the trade-off between the achievement of goals of poverty alleviation and women empowerment (Hulme and Matin,2003.). Targeting women as borrowers and providing loans to poor women do not imply to give power on their hand. Women often lose their self-confidence when they are being asked at the first meeting with MFIs workers, "What is the name of your husband?". In this case," the developmental objectives of targeting credit to women can be eroded if a direct relation between personal loan use and repayment responsibility is ruptured" (Hulme& Moree,2006,p19). MFIs find women as very easy to locate and operate as their male counterparts for distributing and repaying loans. So, Millions of remote women have shown fabulous success in the field of microfinance. They have gained an extraordinary agency and capacity to improve their life-chances and well-being of their family and community. But it is remarkable that most of the success could take place if male counterparts are knowledgeable in marketing and comparatively rich. Though the first case study supports the positive impacts of microcredit program, it is difficult to generalise this success because as I noted before microcredit program can empower only women who are early advantaged with certain income, land and assets. In case of Akhtery Begum Munni, she had a running biscuit factory. She only fuelled her business with credit from microfinance institutions. Moreover she had a supportive husband who gave his hand and shoulder to overcome all social and cultural obstacles. Munni could repay in time and could able to take further loan in order to expand her business. Munni could manage to get a decision making power in both production and marketing level. All these positive factors help Munni to meet her strategic interests as well as practical needs.

Easy access to microcredit cash and microfinance savings may increase women's visibility, verblity and stability in family and market, cannot reduce their strategic disadvantages. Women are still being in joint venture for all their mobility with their husband or other male relatives. Without realization of women's freedom of manoeuvre and their power and ability to run their own enterprises, to handle financial services, how can women be empowered sustainably? As stated, "without parallel interventions fostering women's access to markets, technology, decision-making structures, legal rights and social capital, the positive discrimination inherent in targeted credit ends" (Hulme& Moore, 2006).In such situations, where women are not the consumers but conduits of microfinance service, women's access to microfinance is not actually improving their own economic status and bargaining position in households. Because MFIs give treatment for the symptoms rather than for the root causes. As I say before, my research found no initiatives from MFIs to facilitate women market access. In second case, Khaleda has shown an improvement because she could handle her credit and worked hard in her small business because. Again she wants her entrepreneurship would be ever expanding and makes logical profit. The case shows that her family turned positively towards her but there is no clear evidence about who takes decision how to use resources and profit savings. Moreover, Khaleda is dependent for marketing on her husband. She does not have free market access because of traditional family norms. So, this success will not make any difference in Khaleda's strategic interests and quality of life. This statement is being supported by Kabeer's study that as women are being seen as money lender their household status is being improved. The same study reveals that women who attempt to

challenge gender structure are still being humiliated and confined in cultural berra (obstacles) in developing countries like Bangladesh (Kabeer,2001). Hence, temporary conditional improvement is not the end to sustainable empowerment challenges.

Finally, Microcredit program has neither improved women's dependency status nor increased decision making power as per expectation within household. Women have no control over their loans but have full liability to repay the loans. The third woman's story gives the impression that women become more dependent on their husband or male relatives. Shefali's story tells us how woman can be fell into vulnerable situation if their husband or male counterparts fail or refuse to repay in time. The above case study does not exemplify that microcredit borrowers are able to make household decision very effectively. My research finding is that credit facility can only enable women to be involved in decision making processes rather than empower them to take independent decision. Shefali could only able to decide about enrolment of her daughter but failed to continue her study because of traditional patriarchal thoughts and beliefs. Again, Shefali had no control over her credit but she had the liabilities of repayment. Hence, she was helpless when her husband was abandoned. Even she does not own the land she lived in. She did not receive any skill development training from her credit provider institution. Shefali's unsuccessful story told us that only to disburse credit does not mean women are in access to credit, women are empowered.

## Conclusion

The integration of understanding women strategic interests and practical needs in Government policies and programs is necessary for sustainable empowerment. In this regards Government should initiate backward mapping policy approach. This approach will start with the target women and their opinions. In Bangladesh, policy failed mostly in implementation stage. It needs to pay attention to solve the complexities in the implementation stage before designing the policy. It is noticeable that all the microcredit providers are Non-Governmental organizations, private and for-profit sector. Their ideology is very much profit oriented, competitive, unit cost, market based interests. These private sectors cannot lead the service provisions for the poor and disadvantaged like women without government intervention. Indeed, Government intervention is vital to promote community development and 'social energy' (Uphoff's concept, 1992, cited in Hulme and Morre,2006) through empowering local government wings for regulating and monitoring all credit activities at the target level. However, it will make little difference if the local government remains male regime. Women's representation with actual discretionary power must be ensured in local government. Government may intervene in private life or may choose to not intervene but may introduce some gender-friendly social policy to reduce women's workload for effective participation in productivity and income generating process, basically and permanently, instead partially or temporarily. Government needs to pay attention to make microcredit friendly policies, and law and order to secure active MFIs and related bank branches in remote area. Very recently Bangladesh Government has formed PKSF to scale up finance and to improve industry standards. Some pragmatic steps need to be undertaken by rural community to erode all gender inequalities. Peer groups can be formed lead by female primary teachers to provide informal education. This education will include numeracy, awareness of unfortunate causes that create gender inequality. Print and electronic media can play a vital role to promote social capital to reduce domestic violence. These group works and networking will facilitate women's mobility in market. Both government and non-government need to step forward to take gender sensitive facilities in educational institutes. Government policies and NGOs programs need to focus on women psychological empowerment because only women rather than others can help themselves. Here

psychological empowerment means to increase self-esteem and self-confidence to confront social, cultural, political and perceptual norms and beliefs.

To conclude, the aim of the paper was not to criticise microfinance or microcredit program. It was an attempt to understand critically why microcredit programs cannot achieve expected success since it has enormous potentials. Microcredit is undoubtedly a very useful tool to empower women but it should be mixed with other development strategy like community development, women networking, and training for capacity building. In my research I found that women have found ground but need to elaborate and sustain this progress. It needs to realize for all stakeholders of women's sustainable empowerment that what rights women have at present and what rights they can have, and what is justice for them? Without revising the meaning and language of women empowerment in different way both in international and National level credit facility in women hand would be women in power but not of power. Our Government has adopted some policies regarding women entrepreneurship development in rural Bangladesh. But the complication arises at the time of implementation. Sometimes the services of Government are available in urban areas, whereas rural entrepreneurs continue to be victims of deprivation. In spite of having access to various micro credits, rural women receive almost no training from development organizations, which adversely affects their efficiency and performance. If microfinance and educational projects are to be successful in empowering women, they need to be implemented within the context of empowering women to participate at all levels of government, so that their strategic needs are met.

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## **Ecofeminist pragmatism of Female founders in sociology as source of Women Empowerment in Academia and Society**

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## Abstract

First female philosopher Hypathia and her tragic death is less known while as Minoan era of governing the island Creta represents the egalitarian society, in which females were equal as men, in profession, life and family. It is necessary to conduct the deconstruction and demistification of patriarchal approaches to society and education, in order to form contemporary sociological theory involving the female authors and their accomplishments. The ecofeminist movement was founded during the radical and turbulent social changes of the early 1980s. The aftermath of war, global environmental movements and minority rights movements have joined forces to create significant subversion and an imitative position towards the patriarchally-based theories. Major sociologist author and pragmatist, Nobel Prize Winner, who gained doctoral degree from Yale University and organized Hull House project for investigating the immigrant behaviour, influenced the ecofeminist pragmatism of the Charlotte P. Gilman, and Caroline Bartlett Crane. This position is later on found in works of famous neoecofeminist and sociologists such as Ariell Salleh, Marija Geiger Zeman, Ivanka Buzov, and their ancestors, authors from different fields such as Val Plumwood, Karen J. Warren, Martha Kheel, Yenestra King, Françoise d'Eaubonne and Vandana Shiva. This authors have written about the ecological feminist movement, drawing attention to the need for scientific cognition of the way in which the logic of domination and oppression of women and nature is institutionalized. It is necessary to conduct the deconstruction and demistification of patriarchal approaches to society and education, in order to form contemporary sociological theory involving the female authors and their accomplishments.

**Key words: women founders in sociology, ecofeminist movement, gender based subversion, academia, society, „being written out“.**

## Introduction

Mary Jo Deegan in her work *Women in sociology-bibliographical sourcebook* (1990), states: "Even though there are more than 52 women considered to be founders of sociology, they are still not recognized in sociology". Mary Jo Deegan wrote referate in early 1980-ties *Early Women Sociologists and the American Sociological Society :The Patterns of Exclusion and Participation*, *The American Sociologist*, 1981, Vol.16, February :14-24. and investigates the early women sociologists position in sociology and in ASA organisation. Questions that were raised by Mary Jo Deegan(1981:14) were following: "1. How and why did this men keep women out of the organisation(ASA). 2. Which women participated inspite of this obstacles?, 3. Were there efforts to open the organisation for female participation?, 4. What happened if this efforts were made?". Rather to remove obstacles of gender based marginalisation, female sociologists decided to form the coin term sisters founders in sociology as opposition to founding fathers in sociology, emphasizing the importance of sisterhood in discipline rather than motherhood in disciplines, therefore also marking the places of exclusionment of women in sociology. Sister's founders in sociology are as a coin term formed by Mary Jo Deegan, in order to explain, de marginalisation of female stream sociological theory. Even though there are more than 52 women considered being founders of sociology, they are still not recognized in sociology, Aristotle's distinction between male/female. Shipley represents the key moment to ideological foundation of the women exclusion from academia and public life, because their identification with natural and irrational. Small Albion advocates the doctrine of seperate spheres beliving that men and women are different distinctly, "seperate but equal", comparing this difference to difference in between two musical instruments , having the same relation to the notes in scale, but could not be replaced or supply place in their own seperate series ( 1981, 15). Even though as the chair of Department, he employed women at University, it as only in seperate themes: "household administration, sanitary science, social settlements and statistics" ( Deegan 1981, 15).

### **I.Sexism against Female sociologists**

Small was Chair of the first Sociology Department, American Sociological Association and American Journal of Sociology, he influence the policy of acting towards female sociologists. ASA " then was men's club", women could come to be participant if they were called by male presidents and organizers. Female network in sociology, four presidents invited female sociologists to speak: Ward, Small, Ross, and Thomas. Even though Ward belived in seperate spheres doctrine, he also belived that " women were dominante first and men was a variation of her.(1981:16). Ward supported wark of Charlotte Perkins Gilman and supported the inclusion of women

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, as a respectfull female sociologists and economist was even three times involved as discutant next to first women included in first ASA meeting was Mrs J. Oldenwalrd-Unger. Small invited Jane Addams to speak as major speaker at the ASA conferences, in years 1911, 1912, 1913. the other speakers were Lucy Salmon from Vassar college(1913), and Emily Greene Balch, Wellesley College, 1914 ( 1981:16). But in some years , none of women was included, because they did not get more important roles in meetings. Ross invites Jane Addams to speak on War and Millitarism in their sociological aspects, in 1915, but Emily Green Balch<sup>1</sup> came instead of her, and meeting become contraversial meeting. Addams and Balch were against war and supported pacifism, and also were both Nobel Prize Winners. Jane Addams won the

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<sup>1</sup> *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens, on immigration*

award in 1931, and Emily Green Balch in 1946. None of the men from Chicago should did not want to discuss her papers, and Ross founded two women, after calling fifteen male sociologists: Lillian Wald (Head residents of Henry Settlement, NYC) and Anna Garlin Spencer (Meadville Theological Seminar, Ohio). Even though these women were sociologists, they could not work inside the sociology, only inside the social work network. No women had highest offices during the first year of ASA until 1931, even though 8 women were involved. (Mary Jo Deegan 1981, 18). Even though there are many influential female sociologists they are not well introduced in literature and academic journals because of double standards in recognition of academic works of women. Jessie Bernard strives for the female enlightenment questioning the sociology as male stream and therefore focused only on male experiences, in famous statement: „Can sociology become science of society rather than science of male society?“ (Wharton 2012, 5).

Early eighties were marked by empirical works of sociologists in field of gender in order to mark problems: „differences in jobs vs. gender, differences in payment, education, political participation, and domestic work, women are discriminated at violated....but they also included investigation of unrealistic demands of society in sports, job and interpersonal relation“. Dorothy Smith wrote her famous work *Sociology for women* as antecedents of later formed discipline of sociology of gender. She was lecturer at University of Oregon, in academic staff of 44 persons, she was only woman: „The chilly climate for women“, is the way in which Dorothy Smith explains her experience in teaching the Gender studies in early seventies. Radical feminism with its notion of violence over the women in public and private sphere, demands the identification of these spheres, in order for women to be involved in academic life with overcoming the negative stereotypes regarding the roles of women and men. Therefore, as Ritzer as profeminist sociologist states: „Sociology of gender represents investigation of socially formed identities, of male and female roles, relations and identities –being somewhat different in subject, than feministic focus on women“ (Ritzer 1997, 308-309). Sociology of gender analyzes gender in relation to social structures and relations. Therefore sociology of gender is interdisciplinary, intradisciplinary, pluriperspective, and transdisciplinary (transnational) sub discipline of sociology. Since the formation of the discipline, there is no separate discipline that is considering the history of women in sociology, even though there are significant scientifically approved arguments for its establishment.

## II. “Sister founders vs. founding fathers “

Mary Jo Deegan (1990, 1-463) wrote her significant study-biobibliographical source book on *Women founders in sociology*, in which she mentioned 53 women founders in sociology. In appendix of this work even +66 are mentioned for further investigations (to be investigated)). These women are rarely mentioned in *male stream* sociology. Only profeminist masculine authors mention works of women in sociology. Peter Scot has written study on 50 key sociologists, but he only mentions three women. In comparison to Mary Jo Deegan's work that in total mention even 118 female sociologists; this previously mentioned work is male stream and even discriminating.

Mary Jo Deegan mentions (1990:4-5): „ABBOT EDITH, JANE ADDAMS, ARENDT HANNAH, GREEN BALCH EMILY, DE BEAUVOIR SIMONE, BERNARD JESSIE, SOPHONISBA BRECKINRIDGE, RUTH SHONLE CAVAN, MARY ELIZABETH BURROUGHS COOLIDGE ROBERTS SMITH, COSER LAUB ROSE, DAVIS BEMENT

KATHARINE, DIGGS ELLEN IRENE, DONAVAN FRANCES, EAVES LUCILLE, GILMAN CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN, HAGOOD MARGARET

JARMAN, HAWES AMY, HOLINGWORTH STETTER LETA, HUBER JOAN, HUGHES MACGILL HELEN, KELLEY FLORENCE, KELLOR A. FRANCES, KINGSBURY SUSAN, KLEIN VIOLA, KOLLONTAI ALEXANDRA, KOMAROVSKY MIRRA, BRIANT LEE ELISABETH, HUM LEE ROSE, LOPATA ZNANIECKA HELENA, MERREL LYND HELLEN, MACLEAN MARION ANNIE, MARTINEU HARRIET, MASARYK ALICE, MYRDAL ALVA, OLESEN VIRGINIA, PARSONS CLEWS ELSIE, RILEY WHITE MATHILDA, BAER ROSE CAROLINE, ROSSIE ALICE, SHANAS ETHEL, SMITH DOROTHEY, SPENCER GARLIN ANNA, TAEUBER IRENE B, TAFT JESSIE, TALBOT MARION, SWAINE THOMAS DOROTHEY, VAN KLEECK MARIE, WAX ROSALIE, WEBB BEATRICE, WELLS- -BARNETT IDA, PLUM-WILLIAMS HATTIE „. There are different forms of violence over the women, but this form of exclusion is academic femicide in sociology. These women rarely are mentioned in male stream sociology. Other academic works have several names involved. Profeminist sociologists such as Giddens or Ritzer, and authors involved with sexuality such as Altman, Weeks, Rubin, and masculinities studies Conell, Stoltenberg, mention even more. Examples of famous sociologist are: Jane Addams –founder in sociology, Annie Marion Maclean first female to master in sociology at Chicago University and Phd in sociology (could not work at university , written corespondance with thousands of students)(Jo Deegan 1990, 8). There are also female sociologists, that had written but that were hidden in sociological annals such as(1990, 18-19): „, Jessie Bernard, Ruth Shonle Cavan, Frances Donovan, Helen Hughes, Dorothay Thomas, Fay Karpf, Mabel Eliot, Ellen Black, Vivien Palmers“. The leading person and one of the pioneers in the field was Jane Adams, America Noble Prize winner, Phd in sociology, and establisher of Hull House Homes and developer of technique of mapping. „Hull House was intellectual commune and salon“ ( Jo Deegan 1990, 16) and it involved some of the „brilliant female sociologists who lived and worked there such as Edith Abbot, Emily Green Balch, Sophonisba Breckinridge, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Florence Kelly, Frances Kellor, Julia Lathorp, Mary McDowell, and Annie Marion MacLean“. “Many female sociologists were removed from their sociological positions, states Jo Deegan(1990, 17): Emily Green Balch in 1919, and Anna Garlin Spencer in 1920“. Founding fathers were against involvement of female sociologists at Universities. The only one mentioned usually as female founder in sociology, Harriet Martineau, translated Comte's work into English. Happy housewife myth as stereotype from early fifties till now, was questioned by the results of several empirical studies that involve the quality life of housewife’s vs. life of working women and males. Women that do not work are more stressed and even influence the health problem, and depression, as well as young employed man. Discrimination against women in sociology involves: male stream sociological approaches, there is no female sociology, female history or Female sociology. The most eminent early female sociologists, Jane Addams, sociological pragmatist and American Nobel Prize winner, who had established Hull house for investigation of immigrants’ behaviour, had introduced tehniqe of mapping for doctoral thesis. This female sociologist had influenced all of the men of Chicago school and Dewey, Mead and American pragmatists. Some of the authors, such as Mary Jo Deegan believes that there was female Chicago school first because the Hull House, an Intelctual centre of Chicago was formed three years before Department of Sociology was founded, and therefore Mary Jo Deegan forms hypothesis that Jane Addams was leading female sociologist who was marginalized by male colleagues, and female Chicago shool is formed before male school. Her book Jane Addams and the Men of Chicago school is considered as book of century by

International Sociological Association/ISA/. Emily Green Balch, as a first female officer, was hired to read papers at Wellesely College, in 1889, as a Chair and Professor, but fired from position in 1919, because of pacifism, and later on worked for United Nations. The famous active sociologists were Julia Lathrop (Executive Committee of ASA in 1917) and Grace Abbott (Close associate of Jane Addams worked at Chicago University), Susan Kingsbury and Lucille Eaves<sup>2</sup> were Research directors Women's Educational and Industrial Union. Female sociologists network was very important network for the women sociologist, and organisation of participation of female sociologists at the meetings in the first period of formation, of American Sociological Association. The representatives of this network were: Dummer, Lathrop, Balch, Abbott, with Addams as patron: "they represent sociological worldview that has been neglected, and their contribution and recognition to sociology being denied" (DEEGAN 1981:20). Family section, was a first section that was founded by ETHEL STURGESS DUMMER founder, with the panel entitled "DELINQUENT GIRL"; out of seven panelist, three of them were women in this section. Answer to the exclusionment questions by Deegan are that Women were employed by women only, they were second class citizens in academia, Small believed they belong to separate sphere, included women were part of female network, extreme sexism influenced exclusion, and institutional pattern of ostracism was difficult to destroy (Deegan 1981, 18-20). But, if it is to the investigation conducted by Mary Jo Deegan, and group of authors, there is history of Women in sociology and Eras of Women in sociology:

1. "founding sister " professional definition era"-1840-1890
2. "golden era" -1890-1920
3. founding sisters in the dark era of patriarchal ascendancy (1920-1965)
4. the contemporary era: the battle for women's equal opportunity in sociology (1965-1990)" ( Deegan 1990, 13-21).

In Contemporary era, 1969- sociologists for women in society was established, and first woman was elected president of ASA(1948), and second one in 1973, afterwards Supreme Court- (1989) struggles for permanent place for women professionals in sociology. Founding sisters had changed the relations toward the female sociologists, and sociologists for women in sociology publish books and journals and helps affirmation of female sociology. Contemporary American society involves presidency of women, over the ASA (AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION). Chronological example, in ASA, even 13 females was president (1906-2013). First female president was Dorothea Swaine Thomas in 1952, Mira Komarowsky(1973), Alice S.Rosi(1983), Patricia Hill Collins(2009)( Deegan 1990, 9), Cecillia Ridgeway(2013),... elected presidents for 2014 and 2015 are females as well, Annete Lareau (2014) and Paula England (2015), and for 2016 female prof. Ruth Milkman was elected. 2017, Michelle Lalmant is elected president of ASA. Lengermann and Brantley (1998:14) explain and define notion of „being written out“ as „having once being seen as a presence in community, and then being erased from its records“. Female sociologists were not invisible they were simply written out of the sociological history, even though they were famous public figures and public professional sociologists. Lengermann and Brantley(1998:18) stated that disappearance of women founders in sociology, is connected with the discrimination in regards to race, class, gender, in order for academy to become place of affirmation of only white male

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<sup>2</sup> Eaves taught sociology at Stanford and Nebraska University, only women in coeducational system left because she was not paid.

sociologists who order for women „to disappear“ in „the retelling“ of sociological history. In order to understand ecofeminism in sociology, it is necessary to involve theoretical knowledges of two famous female sociologists, rarely mentioned in sociological textbooks, such as contemporaries Charlotte P. Gilman(1860-1935) and Caroline Bartlett Crane(1858-1935).

### **III. Charlotte P. Gilman and an Ecofeminist pragmatism perspective**

*Herland and with her in our Ourland* is Gilman's saga written in order to give explanations inside the intersection of ecofeminism and feminist pragmatism. Mary Jo Deegan and Christopher W. Podeschi(2001:19) state that Charlotte Perkins Gilman was „forerunner and perhaps a foundation for contemporary ecofeminism“. The theory of this professional female sociologists is important for distinguishment of ecofeminist pragmatism, ecopragsmatism, and environmental pragmatism. Important and significant idea, emphasized by Podeschi and Deegan(2001:19) are found in statement by Joanna Macy, that eco feminism represent “a radical change from a millennia-long amnesia as to who we really are”. The eco feminism is historically developed and based on texts of feminist pragmatist who were mainly female professional sociologists. This writings are rarely mentioned in traditional sociological textbooks, and involve writings and documents from historical period in between 1890-1930-ties. Gilman's saga *Herland and with her in our Ourland*, is “a powerful exploration of gender relations which also includes commentaries on nature and the human relation to nature”( Podeschi and Deegan 2001:20). Society that is consisted only of women, with balanced approach in between women and environment is Herland. Ellador, is the main protagonist of this tale, and she travels, in part entitled *With her in our Ourland*. Unlike, the life in Herland, in this travel Ellador experiences the destruction and waste in patriarchaly organized society where females are dominated and controled over by male. „Patriarchy is central to understanding the domination of women, races, and nature due to the patriarchal drive to conquer, master, manipulate, oppress and exploit what is feared and seen as less powerful”( Podeschi and Deegan 2001:21). Feminist pragmatism is developed as opposition and international alternative thought for patriarchal perspective, and it is based on women centered culture and values. This theory is mainly developed in sociological Mecca, Chicago’s department of Sociology, University of Chicago and Hull House project in period between 1889-1918. Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Marion Talbot, are main female pragmatist and supported and developed this ideas. Nobel Prize winners Emily Greene Balch and Jane Addams, strongly advocated equality in between males and females, believing that democracy and education are strong force of changes in society. Many female sociologists supported this ideas which resulted in “thousands of books and articles”( Podeschi and Deegan 2001:22). Ecofeminism is also defined as „a major intellectual enterprise about women, the self, and community”( Podeschi and Deegan 2001:22). The most important idea of feminist pragmatism was also investigation of matriarchal societies, focusing towards the Great Mother and female representation of goddesses.



**Picture 1. Mother Earth/Pacha mama(www.artsbymia.com, page visited on 1.3.2016)**

Gilman's difference in comparison to other feminist pragmatist, who were sometimes exclusively white and elite, is that her theory was based on Darwinist reformist theories, based on biological female distinctions in culture, reproduction, nurture, etc. Saga written by Gilman is not only profeminist and matriarchal but also pacifistic and anti-militaristic. Ecofeminism and ecofeminist pragmatism are sharing the ecofeminist equation ideas, and therefore are used as synonyms inside the ecofeminist pragmatist sociological theories of female professionals in sociology. „*Herland* is a social and environmental utopia, at least reminiscent of the pre patriarchal societies eco feminist scholars discuss”( Podeschi and Deegan in Mušić 2016: 25). As *Herland* in feminist utopia, the *Ourland* is patriarchal society that is destructive and without ecological consciousness. The male pair for Ellador is named Van. Ellador has notions on environmental disastrous spirits in *Ourland* commenting that “In *Ourland* we have robbed, neglected, and wasted the soil, and that overpopulation is destroying the land in places...The environment in the United States specifically, Ellador remarks, neglect, waste, awful, glaring waste. It makes me sick. It makes me want to cry. As for water, neglect and waste again, and hideous, suicidal defilement”( Ibid in Mušić 2016:26). These ideas are similar to Hawaiian native cultural traditions where goddess Papa (Papahānaumoku), earth mother is touched by evil acts of humans, especially

towards the nature. This goddess is specially adored by native Hawaiian women, and her place of worshipping is called *Hale o Papa*. (Mušić 2017: 2-7). In comparison to experience of male, in saga, when coming to Herland, Van is astonished by the natural resources and beauty of the urban towns. Reproduction and mothering is one of the themes that is discussed inside the notion of logic of care vs. logic of dominance, and therefore Herland is practising the ideal of care ethics vs. human, natural and animal world, while as in Ourland patriarchal society destruction is causing the motherhood and nature as having less importance. Gilman continues to discuss, social relationships inside the female utopia, that is academic and more civilised than other since it is „truly humane and truly civilised (Podeschi and Deegan in Mušić 2016:30). Therefore the social relations are based on the idea of communalism and interconnections. All children are children of all mothers, and after first year of their life, they are educated inside the community, by professional educators and co-mothers, and their biological mother is given less importance. The fundamental idea of education is presented only in connection with motherhood: “Education and nurturing of children clearly demonstrate a belief in communal living as well as a celebration of interconnectivity and unity: motherhood and mothering bind *Herlanders* together, it is their religion” (Podeschi and Deegan in Mušić 2016:32). Since this saga develops in historical comparison of matriarchal societies with newer patriarchal society. Ellador travels with Van through time, and harshly criticizes I World War seeing it as absurd and destructive, and so different from peaceful, caring, and respectful for human, animal and all sorts of life, matriarchal societies of earlier periods. Podeschi and Deegan, forming the final conclusions on Herland saga state :“ Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland/Ourland* saga is a powerful statement condemning patriarchal society and its ill-effects, a classic example of the eco feminist equation”. But yet, they also make notions of Gilman’s exclusions and preferences for hierarchical societies, that are not eco feminist ideas.

#### **IV. Caroline Bartlett Crane, ecofeminist pragmatism and conservation projects**

Linda J. Rynbrandt and Mary Jo Deegan(2002:58), investigated the research projects and importance of Caroline Bartlett Crane’s work, namely giving her academic heritage following remarks: “applied sociologist and noted Progressive Era reformer, was an eminent figure, national leader in municipal sanitation, forerunner of the ecology and eco feminism movements of today, Crane is part of women’s hidden heritage and her life exemplifies the theory of eco feminism pragmatism”. Important fact about biographical notes from Crane’s life was that she becomes part of Ministry despite the wishes of her family. In her devotion she formed settlement in church named Crane’s institutional church in Kalamazoo, Michigan that was similar to Jane Adams’s Hull House settlement, Chicago. Crane was social reformist, active sociologists that dedicated her life to suffrage, human rights, and sanitation- conservation projects. Importance of Caroline Bartlett Crane’s professional work in sociology, is emphasized since her “claim to the title of sociologist is less obvious to contemporary professionals who are trained to emphasize men’s abstract, objective practices in the academy” (Rynbrandt and Deegan 2002: 60). Kasler and Deegan founded criteria for naming female professional , founder in sociology, and Crane meets all seven of them: “because Crane consulted with sociologists, wrote about sociology, taught sociology, did sociology, self-identified as a sociologist, and was identified by others as a sociologist, she was a sociologist” (Rynbrandt and Deegan 2002: 60). Therefore, Linda J. Rynbrandt and Mary Jo Deegan, stated that Crane represent an early American pragmatism movement founder. On the basis of the Greta Gaard’s historical approach to women achievements in history, it has been noticed that binary dichotomies are elevating male accomplishments and devaluating female achievements in order to

identify females with animals, and nature, and rationalizing the dominance over them. Crane's ideas are mainly supporting the ideas of Charlotte P. Gilman, with one move forward, since the Crane was practicing eco feminist pragmatism with interracial focus, rather than supporting the hierarchical society. Feminist pragmatist, namely Crane, Perkins –Gilman and Adams, still, did not believe that women are helpless victims, they saw women as a social reformist and environmental reformist, even though their quest for this later reform was mainly ignored and not well understood. Crane shared her ideas with her male colleagues such as Henderson and Zueblin, that better aesthetics of the town and environment would create better people(Linda J. Rynbrandt and Mary Jo Deegan in Mušić 2016: 48): “Crane actively promoted these ideas when she founded Women's Civic Improvement League in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1904 in order to educate individuals in civic goals of public health, charity, and civic beauty”. She influenced the development of Sociology of education, play and environment, and explained her devotion to civic improvement with notion that everybody will help their own children if their protect their environment. Crane strongly supported the development of playgrounds with emphasizing the importance of recreation and enjoyment in aesthetics and beauty of the environment. As Jane Addams did, Crane as well supports idea that we can understand the individuals if we can be part of their social world, and therefore for social and physical health the recreation and play, and healthy vegetarian diet are necessary. She held ironical speeches and spoke for better treatment of shop girls and horses, since she strongly believed in interconnectedness of all parts of the world. But Crane's interest for the environment was deep and scientifically supported, and therefore she : “ earned the public title of America's Housekeeper, as a result of her studies of municipal sanitation problems, thereby including an important element of environmental concern. Crane conducts sanitary social surveys regarding the public health and safety of over six American cities in her career in municipal sanitation” (Linda J. Rynbrandt and Mary Jo Deegan in Mušić 2016: 50). Club of women to which Crane belonged, organized cleaning of the street, together with sharing the leaflets, such as following one shared in 1904: “Please! The Women Civic Improvement League had undertaken to keep Main Street clean. We ask YOU to help us. Please do not throw anything-paper, fruit skins, peanut shells or any other litter, in the street; put it in the waste-paper can at the corner. and, gentleman, ‘please do not spit on the sidewalk, or in the gratings, or anywhere but in the gutter. Now, please don't throw this in the street!” (Linda J. Rynbrandt and Mary Jo Deegan 2002:63). Crane supported the idea of recycling. Influenced by the idea of American transcendentalism of Ralf Waldo Emerson, she also promoted a feminist theology, and natural and rational approach towards the religion, since she referred to God as mother and father((Linda J. Rynbrandt and Mary Jo Deegan in Mušić 2016: 51). She had different understanding of difference in between sexes, and unlike Adams and Gilman, she did not think that women are more moral and more angelic in comparison to males. Professional sociologist, Crane working in progressive era, had deep interest in conservation projects of forest and environmental disasters. This ideas are only recently being acknowledged in articles of female sociologists, such as emerita Mary Jo Deegan, from Nebraska Lincoln University. Crane very actively opposed to destruction of the environment by Henry Ford, and held speeches actively being involved in reforestation tours, in Michigan area. Supporting the idea of suffragette Anna Howard Shaw who collected the seeds from different trees during the traveling all around the world, she anticipated sustainable development idea: “Shaw's forest should act as an emblem and incentive for American women to mother all little trees-protect them from marauding ex and fire-that they may be to future generations”( Linda J. Rynbrandt and

Mary Jo Deegan 2002:65). Crane offered the perspective of looking from home, other than looking from business side of building projects that involve destruction of nature. Despite her strong approach in social and environmental reforms, Crane had faced the disappointment and also was not successful in carrying out all of her conservation project ideas. “Around 1930, Crane was actively seeking to have Rowe’s Island in the Kalamazoo River become a state park. She was concerned about the preservation of Michigan’s forests and parklands. Her attempts were ultimately unsuccessful” (Linda J. Rynbrandt and Mary Jo Deegan in Mušić 2016: 53). Even though her conservation project was not successful, Caroline Bartlett Crane is considered as leader of American pragmatist movement of early period, and active social reformer included in female founders in sociology.

### **Conclusion**

The initial hypothesis in this work dedicated to investigation of Ecofeminist pragmatism of Female founders in sociology as source of Women Empowerment in Academia and Society, had confirmed that ecofeminist pragmatism authors had influenced the affirmation of female principles, in society and academia. The discussion had been divided into four subsections.

*Sexism against Female sociologists*, focuses towards the historical position of Female sociologists in their profession, the reasons for their exclusionment from sociology. Doctrine of separate spheres was one of the main reasons for segregation of women in sociology, and American Sociological Association at first stage of development was similar to male club with only few women participating around theme of sociology of family. Sister founders vs. father founders focuses towards the formation of new definitions followed by the question raised by Mary Jo Deegan, Patricia Madoo Libermann, Jill Brantley, Christopher W. Podeschi and Linda J. Rynbrandt, which resulted in conclusion that there were female founders in sociology, and therefore female sociologists as professionals and workers inside the academia were not invisible but had been written out of sociological textbooks. In order to understand the notion of “being written out”, it is necessary to discuss theoretical knowledges of two famous female sociologists, rarely mentioned in sociological textbooks, such as contemporaries Charlotte P. Gilman (1860-1935) and Caroline Bartlett Crane (1858-1935). Both of these authors were famous and active social reformists and professional ecofeminist pragmatist and sociologists. In their work the experience of marginalization and discrimination is described in different forms. The eco feminism is historically developed and based on texts of feminist pragmatist who were mainly female professional sociologists. These writings are rarely mentioned in traditional sociological textbooks, and involve writings and documents from historical period in between 1890-1930-ties. Gilman’s saga *Herland and with her in our Ourland*, is “a powerful exploration of gender relations which also includes commentaries on nature and the human relation to nature” (Podeschi and Deegan 2001:20). Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland/Ourland* saga is a powerful statement condemning patriarchal society and its ill-effects, a classic example of the eco feminist equation”. But yet, they also make notions of Gilman’s exclusions and preferences for hierarchical societies, that are not eco feminist ideas. Crane formed settlement in church named Crane’s institutional church in Kalamazoo, Michigan that was similar to Jane Adams’s Hull House settlement, Chicago. Crane was social reformist, active sociologists that dedicated her life to suffrage, human rights, and sanitation- conservation projects. Importance of Caroline Bartlett Crane’s professional work in sociology, is emphasized since her “claim to the title of sociologist is less obvious to contemporary professionals who are trained to emphasize men’s abstract, objective practices in the academy” (Rynbrandt

and Deegan 2002: 60). Kasler and Deegan founded criteria for naming female professional , founder in sociology, and Crane meets all seven of them: “because Crane consulted with sociologists, wrote about sociology, taught sociology, did sociology, self-identified as a sociologist, and was identified by others as a sociologist, she was a sociologist” (Rynbrandt and Deegan 2002: 60). Supporting the idea of suffragette Anna Howard Shaw who collected the seeds from different trees during the traveling all around the world, she anticipated sustainable development idea. These two biographical examples, confirmed the initial idea formed in this investigation, that only thorough in depth analyses of contemporary sociological biographical recoveries of female founders in sociology, conducted by authors such as Deegan, Madoo Lengermann, Niebrugge Brantley, Kasler, Rynbrandt, and Podeschi. Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim ( Giddens and Sutton 2010: 188) stated that female educational liberation happened from 1960-ties and on: “ What is new is the individual female biography.....The individualized biography assumes that everyone can update and optimize his and hers decisions“ in order to be open to new educational challenges with constant willingness to study and focus toward lifelong learning project.

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Mother Earth/Pacha mama ([www.artsbymia.com](http://www.artsbymia.com), page visited on 1.3.2016)

## **Empowering Community Women as new leaders in health promotion among tribal pregnant women in Mysore District, Karnataka, India**

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## Abstract

**Background:** Women in rural and tribal India must be seen not just as reproducers, home makers, and supplementary earners, but as productive members of the community and society. Community women can become change-makers by promoting health for poor and marginalized women by using social skills to build rapport with the women in the community, identify the cause of the various health problems, and encourage women to seek services such as HIV/STD testing and screening for cervical cancer.

**Objective:** In 2016, PHRII a community-based organization working for Women's Health organized one day women's health training program for select active tribal women from Mysore District, Karnataka as part of a larger effort to empower local women to improve women's health in their community. The aim was to increase health service utilization with a particular emphasis on empowerment of local women, strengthening linkage and innovative intervention to increase the uptake of HIV testing among tribal pregnant women.

**Methods:** Trained counselors from PHRII recruited 11 community women from 22 tribal areas to serve as Peer Health Educators (PHE) and receive training in health promotion. Training was conducted in Kannada using didactic presentations, debate, role-play and panel discussions. Topics included maternal health, childcare, HIV, reproductive health, and leadership building. Knowledge was assessed before and after the training with pre and post tests.

**Results:** The median age of PHE was 27 and most of them had completed 10<sup>th</sup> grade of education. The PHE training program proved to be successful as 71 pregnant women were referred by PHE for the mobile clinic conducted by PHRII. Of these women, 67 (94.37%) accepted ANC services along with HIV testing and counseling.

**Conclusion:** The efforts undertaken by PHRII show that empowering community women through education and training can be effective in improving women's health in rural communities in relation to ANC services and HIV testing. This module acts as a platform for sustainable community health program as we are leaving the knowledge about women's health with the local community women.

**Keywords:** Community women, Tribal pregnant women, Training, ANC services, HIV testing and counseling,

## **Globally applicable method of teaching equality**

### **How to spread the message of awareness and constructive action**

Dr. Ella Salome Roininen  
Kalaidos University of Applied Sciences Switzerland

I teach women's and minorities' empowerment to people from all over the world. Based on my theoretical and practical insights, I have developed a training method that can provide key revelations to students, professionals, field workers, policy makers and leaders of all lines. The method is not culturally bound, as the social mechanisms leading to inequalities are the same independent of the context. The basic program can be run in two days, and won't require more than basic facilities. This makes it an effective gender equality measure.

I share the core ideas of the training at the conference, with the aim to trigger a wider global community to implement it. In the training the shift in mindset is unfolded gradually, in a practical and sensitive manner suitable to the context. It is about discovery and inspiration. The interactive, safe and supportive workshop form encourages participants to relate the learned to their own experiences, and in this way immediately take ownership of the knowledge.

Empowerment happens when we learn to intellectualise the inequalities we face, and constructively integrate this knowledge into our every day lives. This gives courage to claim the space that belongs to us, and to take responsibility for driving inclusion in our own environment. The results have been proved by a number of students. For those interested, I am available to provide workshops on a non-profit basis.

## **How Emotionally Intelligent Are You? A Literature Review of the Correlation between Emotionally Intelligent Women and Empowered Leaders**

Nicole Dhanraj, Ph.D., R.T (R)(CT)(MR)

Professional women are faced with many stresses in their daily work. These include making critical decisions regarding employee's performance, being accountable for budget and operational efficiency, personality differences amongst lateral colleagues and upper management and their home/personal life. Some women seek means to personally develop themselves, but often others neglect or are unsure how to accomplish this development. Consequently, some are left to handle their emotions on their own while others may seek help silently. Intense emotions that arise from managing these stressors can significantly impact a woman's effectiveness as a leader and may lead to termination. Emotional intelligence is a popular concept as psychologists believe that anything that impact a person's mind, also impacts the organization they work for. The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of methods to recognize and understand emotions, how to react and manage the emotions, how to maintain mental stability and consistently be an effective leader regardless of tumultuous situations. This paper will also discuss the benefits of increasing one's emotional intelligence as well as the importance establishing a support system to increase one's emotional intelligence that will ultimately result in more successful, resilient and empowered women leaders.

**Leadership TKO for Women: Power Punch Strategies That Will Knock Out  
Feminine Leadership Challenges and Maximize Their Potential**

**By**

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## Abstract

Leadership itself is a very broad concept, and various theories and styles of leadership exist. Female leadership is just one branch of this concept and can also be defined in different ways. Some understand female leadership as the fact that women can be and are leaders; others may define it from a feminist point of view, and as a matter of equality and the right to have the same opportunities. Female leadership is most commonly defined by the differences between femininity and masculinity. The characteristics that are considered to influence decision making, problem solving and achievements are often compared. The aim of this discussion is to emphasize the value and benefits of feminine characteristics in leadership today and the benefits diversity brings to organizations/businesses and life itself. There are many other differences between the masculine and feminine behaviour such as communication, the way of understanding reality and authority. Feminine way of communicating is horizontal, which means that it strengthens the relationships between people, creates team spirit and equality. Masculine way of communicating is vertical, involving the idea hierarchical relationships and giving information from top downwards. This way of communicating accentuates authority. Women's educational level is high in many parts of the world today in which women are outperforming men and thus women do not lack competence or knowhow when it comes to demanding positions. Nevertheless, the number of female leaders is low in many parts of the world. In this discussion, the authors will demonstrate what the situation of female leaders is globally, and how it has changed. The purpose of this discussion is to know how important leadership is, examine the characteristics these empowered women possess, discover ensuing challenges and barriers, and describe successful leadership, as defined by the participants.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **Meet Lakeisha McKnight, the Transformational Global Leader**

I am Lakeisha McKnight, and I would like to welcome you into my life. I am currently an entrepreneur, an owner of the ILead Company, a training company based in Chesapeake, Virginia that has also a branch in Nigeria, Africa. I am also an active John Maxwell Team partner where I work with building female leaders across the world.

I feel very excited about the career path I have right now. It also makes me feel rewarded because I know that I am impacting women's lives. I am very happy helping women become the winning leaders that they desire to become. I have not always been in the position whereby I have owned my own company. I have been a part of various positions within organizations. I also have an experience starting from a few ventures that did not work. I have had quite a few moments where I experienced failures, where I felt unaccomplished. I had times that I wanted to throw in the towel. But these failures did not stop me from pressing forward. I did not give up. I have gone through many things to reference that has helped me to have this type of attitude when it came to choosing a career path and stepping into the position of leadership.

In this particular time, I would like to take you down on this journey to help us understand how I reached this point in my life. Every woman has a unique journey and every one of us has this unique ability to lead that we take on various roles within our lives. I for myself know that I have these various roles right now. As a matter of fact, I am a wife for over ten years now and a mother of two. I am also a mentor to many. I am also a consultant to quite a few female entrepreneurs. And the list goes on and on. It is very important to paint this picture and to take you with me and these five amazing women I know to the journey down of our memory lane so that you can see how we reached this point. These processes will

actually help you to press forward to your destiny as a winning leader. You will get to know how modeled leadership is very important as you grow or as you influence other people, you will learn the difference between organizational leadership and visionary leadership, what is work-life balance, how to intentionally grow as a woman, what are the invaluable laws of growth and how to overcome it, what are the good qualities of good leaders, and how these five empowered women survived their life problems through their own unique stories, how they managed to be successful persons right now, and their tips on how you can also achieve their accomplishments.

I am Lakeisha McKnight, the transformational global leader!!!

Come down the memory lane with me.

## **Modeled Leadership**

Modeled leadership is something that will help you paint the picture of how you are first introduced to the concept of leadership. It is usually shown as early as your childhood days and transitions as you grow into a teenager or during the time you're growing up. The idea of "Model" in leadership is to demonstrate and display it before you. Let us go back and think about my experience back to the time when I first received and watched my first visual model of leadership. Let us go back and reflect back on my upbringing.

As a woman, I want to help you to understand that some of us may not have that ideal picture of leadership. Thinking about leadership term itself, think about how it was defined as explained by my mentor Dr. John Maxwell. Leadership for him is about influence, nothing more and nothing less. This idea of modeled leadership is the type of influence that is displayed before us as we were growing up and as we were reared. You are strongly influenced depending on your background. You are strongly influenced with how you were raised and the environment you are in. These factors impact your ability to see and to experience modeled leadership.

With that, a concern for the lack of strong models arises. There are many women around the world who may not have grown up with both parents inside of the household. This may be a case for any of you, too. To reflect for myself, I know that my situation and journey was a bit different. Every woman's journey is different. But we can work on this. If you are a mother right now and you are reading this particular chapter, understand that it is never too late to model leadership before your children. Model leadership inside of your home. This is a concern for many people around the world today.

You may not have both parents and any of your parents, or you may have grown up in a foster home or have been adopted, or you could be an orphan or had been an orphan, it

depends on the environment you are in. Either way, some women miss out the concept of modeled leadership. As you transition to becoming an adult and move forward in your life, you can still experience some form of leadership before other adults.

Let us talk about my experience of model leadership. I grew up in Paterson, New Jersey, United States. I grew up with my mother, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, and my uncle. We all resided in the same home. It was a nice and big home. It has about seven to eight bedrooms, had an attic, a basement, and several bathrooms. Indeed, a very comfortable place to live. I grew up as an only child for my mom. My father has another child. I grew up believing that my dad separated when I was young. We did not have a strong relationship with my father but I know that I have a mother sister. I had my mother primarily raise me as the main parent together with the other adults around me, as I have mentioned.

Having these adults around me has given me this unique ability to observe each and every one of them. These adults had separate careers of their own. Each of them had their own journey that they had to embark upon.

There were certain things that I remember growing up in the home. I could still remember the moments when I woke up to pancakes and sausages of my grandmother. I could smell that sweet syrup from my room, running down the stairs, and eating breakfast prepared by my maternal grandmother. She makes breakfast for the entire household and I could not wait to get my hands on some of the bacon and grits that she usually prepares. Honestly speaking, I love my grandmother's cooking up to this day and I am grateful because I could still taste it since she is still alive. I love every bit of her cooked meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. As a young child transitioning into the young-adult to adult, I was able to observe how she conducted herself inside of our home. I listened as she shared her responsibilities inside of the household.

I also observed my maternal grandfather as well. My grandmother and grandfather worked in opposite shifts. My grandmother work during the night while my grandfather works during the day. There was always someone at home and they always work together to make sure that all of the needs of the people living in our home will be met, which includes mine. My grandparents did not know that I have been watching them intently from my perspective. I have observed that they take care of their responsibilities and lead inside of our home.

Despite the situation, my grandparents having to go to work and come home to take care of their responsibilities, I rarely heard them complain. I cannot recall any moment nor hear them alone argue. I did not see them disagree with something. Observing disagreements can be very helpful because it can always help you to learn how to handle conflicts. My grandparents were both loving adults and loving grandparents. I could still remember whenever I needed money, I would just go to my grandfather or grandmother and they would graciously give it to me. I also remember that my grandmother encourages me to consult or speak with my grandfather if there was a financial need because she wanted to make sure that they were in one accord and that she was not agreeing to something that my grandfather has disagreed. They always make sure that they were in one accord with making decisions as it pertains to me or to other family members inside of the household.

I have observed this form of leadership of being in one accord, consulting and communicating with other leaders inside of the home. It is a very critical point when it comes to leadership communication. In leadership communication, you have to make sure that your leaders are in one accord with you. That was what my maternal grandmother and grandfather did inside of the home.

Another point I want to emphasize about this modeled leadership that I observed in my rearing and growing up is the importance of coming together and meeting each other. These

are critical times throughout the year and this may be common with many families, including yours, who will come together to celebrate holidays. During holidays such as Christmas and Thanksgiving, we come together and we celebrate. We share what we are grateful and thankful for. This is very important because it connects members of an organization, either you are part of a company or you own your business.

Coming together, meeting and fellowshiping is very important. Being involved as a leader is very important and that is what I was shown as a young adult and as a child: it is important to come together and communicate. I enjoyed those moments. I enjoyed Christmas, coming downstairs early in the morning on Christmas Day, tearing and opening those Christmas gifts. And of course, the smell of breakfast on that Christmas morning. I also enjoyed seeing smiles on everyone's faces. The joy that I have experienced as a child during those moments of coming together in communing and fellowshiping will never be forgotten. It is something that I am going to continue with my family.

These are just some pivotal examples that I was shown as a child and as a young adult that has helped to model leadership. I can honestly say, that I have also learned with my mom being present, that I was also shown and given an example of leadership. Have you experienced trying to get work done and then technology totally fails? Well, my mother experienced that. She is a single parent and she is trying to get this work done while, of course, taking care of her responsibility as a mother. She is ensuring that my need is met. It was already in the middle of the night when she could not recover her content and material for her paper for school. I don't think it was saved on the computer. I observed her response to this technology failure. She wanted to give up and she cried. She was very broken because of it. I observed my mother wipe those tears off her face, reboot that computer and began working on that paper once again and she did not give up. It was very important for me to see that as a child, not to give up. I have learned from her that when things fail and when things

get hard, it is important not to give up. This is the most powerful thing that I have learned from observing my mother as she was going through school. That no matter how impossible it is to recover from failure, we must move on and take a step forward. This is the important factor as a leader and this is why modeled leadership is important.

So let me share with you some action steps at this particular moment. What is it that you can glean right now from modeled leadership as you are moving forward?

One, it is important that you communicate. You communicate as a leader. Communicating can also give you learnings from modeled leadership. Communicate and be the model, if you are a parent inside of your household or even if you are just a member of a household. The leadership model that others should be seeing. Have that leadership attitude that will influence the other member of the household's view with leadership. You must inspire others through your actions.

Secondly, it is important for you to come together and connect. Modeled leadership can show you that; and you can be a model where you begin to connect with those on your team or a part of your organization. Communication is essential to great leaders because it is a way to influence others through your words. But you must also listen and observe others before you speak. You should know how to deal with others prior to saying your message. Communication will also help you reveal your true self, to let other people see your soul. To inspire them with your words.

Thirdly, it is important for you to be able to do one important thing: Never give up. Leaders do not give up. You need to build resilience. When things fail, bounce back. Continue to press forward and you will succeed. You will eventually win. You will see the prize at the very end. Always remember that our worst trials would eventually turn into our sweetest success in the future if we keep a positive attitude towards every failure that we encounter.

Worst situations in our lives will make us become wiser and stronger. It is something that we need to mould ourselves to become better and to survive life's most difficult challenges.

But remember that modelled leadership does not stop there after you graduate. It will go through with your life. I began to learn leadership in a stronger way as I began transition to work in the corporate world.

## **Organizational Leadership**

I want to introduce to you the concept of organizational leadership. Organizational leadership is the type of leadership that is displayed as a member of a business or an organization where you occupy a position given to you within an organization to help the organization completely or fulfil its mission.

It has been a woman's concern when it comes to having a fair ability to be promoted in an organization and have limited positions available for them. It is a struggle that I have also encountered while I was young.

I transitioned from being a young person right in my pre-teens, then I became a teenager still growing up in New Jersey. I remember having to audition to become a student at a performing arts high school. It was Rosa Parks High School of Fine and Performing Arts in Patterson, New Jersey where I remember being so nervous having to audition for the school. I majored in drama. So what I primarily did apart as a member of the school was theatre. I did lots of theatre works. I had a drama coach as well. I definitely became a stronger leader by being under his coaching. As I became a young adult, transitioned out of high school and moved forward, I began to pick up on some strong concepts as it pertains to leadership. I majored in psychology and political science when I was in college at Pennsylvania State University. My journey there was really good and unforgettable. I was a part of several student organizations and became a member of a Christian sorority. That school radically changed my life and it helped to really form a new concept of leadership for me.

But as I transitioned out of college, I had really no clue of what organization I wanted to be a part of. I knew that I had my degrees and I knew that God was going to open up some doors for me for employment. It was a matter of waiting and trying to see what direction he was going to turn me in or bring me down so that I can become a productive member of society.

I pressed forward. I began to seek God and asked God what is it that he would have me to do, what organization should I be a part of when I graduated from school. And He began to open up some doors for me. I got started. I got involved in the field of social work. I became a worker, a part of an organization in New Jersey that helped to protect children from abuse and neglect. This is where I really got my good footing. I have had some few jobs in college but I really got my footing in the social work field and became part of a bigger organization when I transitioned out of college and I moved back home to New Jersey. I definitely had a sense of the structure of being a part of the social work organization.

It was an honour to be a part of it and I definitely appreciated all of the experiences that were obtained. That is just one position that I had. Being a part of that social work organization, I have occupied many different positions not only as a Child Protective Services worker in New Jersey but I have occupied in Virginia as well whereby I work with kids in the foster care system. I have worked and I have also been a part of coaching organizations. I have supervised several people. Through all of these experiences of being a part of Social Work agencies, private agencies and such, I have learned and gleaned a lot as it pertains to leadership, the right way to conduct leadership and the unhealthy way to be a leader.

One thing that stood out to me being a part of organizations in New Jersey as well as Virginia is that I have seen between trying to advance in a particular field, or in the social work field or any field nonetheless, as a woman. I have observed that it is really easy to be able to move up the ladder as a male but the struggle was real as a female. Trying to move forward in a leadership or at least a higher responsibility position, whether it was a director of a program or just overseeing a particular program, was really difficult to reach those positions as a female.

I would sit back and I would question, why is that? This has been a concern for me for many years. You may have also experienced this for yourself, the struggle of trying to occupy a position. For women, it is very important that we that we have a fair opportunity and chances to elevate and move forward and be promoted into several positions. However, it is unfortunate that in some part of certain industries, that is not possible.

For women, we have to stand strong and we have to in some sense, prove ourselves that we are quite capable of occupying those positions. This brings to mind a movie that was great, entitled "Hidden Figures". It is a very good movie that displays this concept of being a leader in industries where women are not represented well and where women struggle to occupy leadership positions. They had to prove themselves to be capable and qualified to be in those positions. It was well-deserved. They finally did reach those positions and obtained them but they went through lots of struggles. But the one important thing about the women in the movie was that they did not give up. They stayed their ground and this is what we as women must continue to do. Stay on your ground. This is a big concern as it pertains to you and i in the organizational world, in the business world, being treated fairly, to be able to occupy positions in higher management levels.

It is important because as women sometimes we can take on that role of being second best when we are quite capable of being first. And there are certain struggles of course that we also have when it comes to verbalizing what we want, being assertive and asking for what we want. That ask factor, that is A-S-K, the ask factor is very important. We must ask for what we want.

The Bible also talks about this as well. We have to ask and we shall receive. If we do not open up our mouths to ask for what we want, it will be even harder and the struggle will be even more difficult and apparent.

I want to share with you even my experience as it pertains to organizational leadership all the more because there were times where the struggle was indeed real and I had to prove myself to be quite capable of occupying the position.

I was part of many organizations where they would only keep you really and only had available positions in the direct services area. I was at the very bottom, I was the direct services worker. I had to see the families or see these individuals, the adults, one on one. There were very few opportunities for promotion to become supervisor or director. What they do is, they promote education through helping you to get another degree, which is fine. I took advantage of it and I received a master's degree through an organization but the limitation of the positions available was present. There was no room for growth, no room for promotion. Yet it was encouraged for a female before the individuals present to take advantage of the educational program. And this is the deficit; this is the concern that I have faced being a part of organizations.

The encouragement for education is great and the program did not last that long to take advantage of the educational program. But the room for growth, the ability to be promoted was limited. That is where I struggled. I found myself hitting a glass wall, a glass ceiling not sure which way to go, not that I have confidence that I wanted to continue on that road. This may be the case for yourself right now. Not really sure of where to go, feeling like you cannot move, you cannot go to and from, and even when you are part of the organization there are certain restrictions where you are limited to being able to go on vacations. You do not really have a certain amount of days you can take or go do what you need to do. Your sick days are limited. Had lots of limitation when being a part of an organization. You have to stay within the realms or the rules that are given to you. Your realm of influence, your ability to influence certain areas in an organization is limited because you are not in a position to be able to change those rules.

Now it could be the cases that the organization and even some of the organizations I was a part of would allow you voice your concerns, but the question was whether they were hearing the concern. We can voice it but were the individuals who were responsible for ensuring satisfaction of the employees hearing the concerns? They might have been listening and reading the concerns but whether they were truly hearing the concerns was a question.

I have seen these cases across several organizations to be the case where they may have on paper to express that you can voice your concerns but when the concerns were voiced, were they really truly taken into consideration so that change can be made manifest? Assess where you are. Give yourself a room for growth and ask with assertiveness.

## **Visionary Leadership**

Visionary Leadership is a form of influence whereby you have a vision or you have a mission that you would love to see accomplished or fulfilled, not necessarily in your lifetime but that can continue on even when you have been removed from this earth. So, you have been given this idea, this concept that is going to blossom gradually during your lifetime and going to continue even as you exit this earth. It could continue with your children and your children's children. With this concept, think about goals. I want you to think about the things that you want to accomplish in your life. In order for you to live each day, you need to have direction. You need to know where you are going. This is very important when it comes to vision because the concept of vision is being able to see. So, if your vision is hindered or if you do not have great vision, then you can be led in any direction. But if your vision is very clear and there is nothing hindering you from being able to walk in the direction and travel in the direction of your destination, then you are going to be quite successful. This for me had become clearer and more apparent as I began transition and God begins to share with me what is it that he wanted me to do, to empower women and to build leaders.

It was through my experience of being a member of organizations and through my relationship with God that he began to share with me some things that he would have me do. He began to share with me a new chapter in my life, a new journey, a new path that he was soon about to take me down and this is down the road of becoming an official entrepreneur. He began to share with me a vision. It was at this time that I am going to share with you something very important and a concept that would not be new to you. I can now give you more information to help you to become more educated on the concept and that is visionary leadership.

It was during that experience of being a part of a Christian sorority when I was in college that the vision was implanted. It was clear in his appearance that he wanted me to touch lives on a global level. It was beyond me. Every female sometimes has her ability to have a vision that is hindered. It could be the case that it is hindered because of day by day responsibilities that we as women may have.

It could be the concern of women to have this lack of vision due to not being included in activities during your childhood days. That when you were raised as a young girl coming up in your city that you really did not have that example of having a clear path and do not know the direction that you want to go in. So, if modeled leadership was not there for you, then it could be the case that it is difficult for you to have a vision or to be a visionary leader. You probably know that there is something that you need to be doing, and is a greater reason why you are here on Earth but because of not having an enough people to influence you, you have no clear vision at all. Since you now know what to do, you need to have a crystal-clear concept of where you need to go in this stage of your life. You need that guidance that will help you make the vision a bit clearer.

A lot of women around the world has this case. You too could be experiencing various hardships in life that hinder your ability to see clearly. I am talking about various hardships including divorce, domestic violence, or abuse as a child that you may have experienced that hindered your ability to move forward with your life.

If ever you have encountered any of these hindering factors, establish a plan. Your plan is very important because it will be your guide when taking actions about it. Taking actions about your plan will never be an easy job but always be positive about it. If your established plan fails, do not give up. Make another plan and take action again, until you accomplish that certain plan. To motivate yourself about your plan, you may have the option to give yourself

a reward when you accomplish any of it. Rewards are strong factors and motivation to achieve your visions.

Also, when you are in the process of fulfilling your vision, do not forget to review all of your experiences and the lessons you have learned along the way. It will help in pushing forward with your next goals. Your experiences will teach you to adjust in any hindrance for your visions or goals.

## **Work-Life Balance**

Life balance means different things to different people - for some it may mean a feeling of organization, for some it is a sense of freedom, for others, it may be emotional serenity. How do you define life balance? This is the most important question.

The first thing that you must remember is that balance is a state of alignment - energy alignment and emotional alignment. It is the state of equilibrium that is achieved when your emotional resonance is in alignment with what you are seeking to create, desire, and focus upon.

Stress and confusion are a woman's concern when it comes to work-life balance. Women usually lose sense of self because they only focus on the happiness of other people rather than giving their selves worth, too.

For example - if it is your desire to create pleasant and joyful relationships with your children, you would not experience balance if your focus is on everything you dislike about their actions. To experience balance, you would need to line up your thoughts and emotions with your desire versus your lack of it. What do you love and appreciate about them? Thoughts of ease versus thoughts of resistance - the place to be.

Another example - If you desire more in your life than you think that you can achieve... You are out of balance! You must take the emotional journey to line up your thoughts and emotions with what you desire in life. If you desire a million-dollar home, then you must do the emotional and energetic work to be in alignment...you need to redirect your thoughts, emotions, focus, to be in alignment with this desire. Replace your thoughts with negativity with perhaps the thought that anything is possible!

One more – money. Money is such a prevalent "issue" when it comes to creating. But imagine for a moment that effect of being out of balance with money... Desiring more money

in your life that you are allowing to flow into your experience gets a little uncomfortable, doesn't it? So, sense for a moment how it might feel to be in alignment with the amount of money that you would like to create... To love money, to appreciate it, to give up negative beliefs about it shifts you to a different place, doesn't it? This is the place of balance.

Let's talk a little more about how to create life balance.... Here are a few tips from this perspective.

1. Keep your desires loud and clear. Ask yourself, are my signals muddied by thoughts, beliefs, and emotions that are not in support of where I want to go? Do I have negative resonance in my creation field? If the answer is yes, then keep reaching for thoughts and emotions that support the joy of your desires.

2. Balance the emotional journey with the action journey. How you feel is much more important than what you do. What you visualize, what you expect, what you hope for, what you get passionate about is your emotional journey. What you do is important - but make sure you are taking "inspired action" which of course was brought forth from such a juicy emotional journey!

3. Be cognizant of your resistance, and take this as a clue from your built-in guidance system that you are not in balance. If you are not, then release your resistance by making emotional choices (thoughts and feelings) and line up - or make a choice to change your desires. Do you want something because you want it, or do you just think you want it...or think you should want it? Do you need to walk away from something or does your negative belief system need tweaking? Pay close attention.

4. When you experience difficulty or contrast in your life, use it as an opportunity to become even more crystal clear about what you are wanting, your preferences, your desires... Will

you settle for less? NO! Use contrast as a learning tool and as the spring board. Ask yourself, now how did I attract this and create this in my life?

5. With that said, "get" there is no "random" life balance, or the experience of it, is a state that you create. You do not randomly get picked for a terrible career, you do not randomly get in a car accident. You are a magnet, and you live in a world of attraction. Period... Does that sound harsh? It is the lovely and beautiful truth. Truly, when you start to step into this state, you will begin to realize how absolutely powerful you are.

6. Do not let others' needs, circumstances, emotional balance supersede your own. Self-care. This is something that is foundational to an emotional resonance that brings forth a state and an experience of life balance. Do you put yourself first? Do you honour yourself as the perfect spiritual being that you are? Do you honor yourself enough to step into your power? Do you allow yourself to make "mistakes", learn from them, and know you are perfect no matter what? Do you give yourself permission to believe? Do you give yourself permission to want more? There are millions of different ways to take care of yourself and allow this resonance to permeate your life. Find what feels good to you.

7. Do not forget to ask yourself, "What does life balance look like to me? What would it feel like?" Focus on the feeling of balance. Step into this place and know that it exists within yourself, versus outside of yourself. Will you allow yourself to step into life balance, let's say... RIGHT NOW? Begin by writing down and appreciating all that you can in your life this very second.

In short, you must write down your roles, know what is required in the role you are in, ask yourself if it is a part of your personal mission. After having assessed it, clean it up. Prepare yourself for daily tasks and start everything according to your plans but make sure that you take care of yourself during the process.

## **Intentional Leadership Growth for Women - Women and Leadership**

According to the majority of Americans, women are as capable as men in terms of politics and they can also dominate the corporate boardroom. According to Pew Research Centre survey, women are more compassionate and organized leaders than men.

There is really not much of a difference in characteristics between men and women when it comes to political and business relationship. But women have an advantage in some areas over men.

But what really is a leader? A leader is a person or thing that holds a dominant or superior position within its field, and is able to exercise a high degree of control or influence over others. Leadership involves establishing a clear vision and provides the necessary knowledge and information to realize that vision.

It is important to know that leadership does not always have to incorporate formal authority. There are unique and individual aspects that must be possessed by a person that can influence other people to follow and listen to them. Various powers a person must possess include:

- Coercive Power – the ability to influence the decision and can threaten punishment if the person does not follow instructions.
- Legitimate Power – the power you derive from your formal position or office held in the organization's hierarchy of authority.
- Reward Power – the power of a person in the higher position to give some reward to someone in lower position as a means to influence the work of the person in the lower position.
- Charismatic Power – the use of charm to engage an audience and gather something advantageous in return.

- Expert power – the power based on an employee’s perception that some other member has a high level of knowledge that other employee lacks.
- Information Power - the power to have certain information that might be needed by others and can control others to reach an important goal.
- Referent Power – the ability of a person to cultivate the admiration of his followers in such a way that they wish to be like him/her.

To achieve this kind of power, you must grow within yourself. You need to grow in order to become better. But growth does not happen instantly. It can be achieved gradually. Some growth may take few days and some may take years to completely grow.

Now, list your previous accomplishments and future goals. If your answers are based on activities, then you do not have plan to become better. You do not plan to improve yourself. Focus on how you can improve as a person so that you will grow and will always hit your goals. Here are some of the growth gap cons that is usually practiced and the actions steps to take to become better:

- a. Assumption Gap – when you assume that you will automatically grow. It is when people think that mental, spiritual, and emotional growth follows the same as physical growth. No one improves by accident. It does not happen on its own. You need to work for it, and no one else will do it for you.
- b. Knowledge Gap – when you think you do not know how to grow. You must decide where you need or whether you want to grow. You choose what to learn, and you follow through with discipline and pace you set: attitude, goals, discipline, measurement, and consistency.
- c. Timing Gap – when you keep on thinking that it is not the right time to begin. Do what you have decided. Do not be afraid to start growing up and develop your

potentials. Once you have decided to grow and do what is needed, you will keep on growing, asking, and looking forward to what happens next in your life.

- d. Mistake Gap – when you are afraid of making mistakes. Do not be afraid of making mistakes if you really want to grow. A mistake is just another way of doing things. The good thing about facing mistakes is, you realize you will be moving in the right direction after you have realized that you made the wrong move.
- e. Perfection Gap – when you find the best way before you start. When we plan, we often look forward to see the whole picture before we begin to work for our plan, but in reality, we can only disclose the results when we keep on moving forward with our plans.
- f. Inspiration Gap – when you don't feel like doing it. Motivation is actually a trap. No one can force you to do something you must do but yourself alone. Motivation is a by-product when you engage in doing something.
- g. Comparison Gap – when you think that others are better than yourself. Do not compare yourself with other people who have more achievements than yours. Hence, you should be encouraged. You should be comfortable being out of your comfort zone as you progress.
- h. Expectation Gap – when you think that your ideas would be easier than the standard process. You cannot change a result overnight but you can change how you can achieve those results.

## **The Transition to Intentional Growth**

- a. Ask These Big Questions Now – Where do you want to go in life? What’s the farthest you can imagine going? After asking yourself these questions, invest in yourself and make the best you can be.
- b. Do it now. Have the sense of urgency in everything that you do. Doing things later is a trap. It will kill your dreams and will soon delay your chances of success.
- c. Face the fear factor. Do not be afraid of failure. Do not be afraid to trade security for the unknown. Do not fear of what others would say or think. Always remember that your faith is greater than your fears and you will overcome everything only when you believe you can do it.
- d. Change from Accidental to Intentional Growth. Insist on starting today. Do not just plan to start things the next day. Do not wait for the growth to come, take the responsibility to grow. Do not learn only from your mistakes, learn before committing one. Do not depend on good lucks, rely on your hard works. Do not quit early and often, learn to persevere longer and harder. Do not fall into bad habits, fight for good ones. Do not play safe, take some risks. Do not just rely on talent, rely on character. Lastly, do not stop learning after your graduation. Think like a learner. Learn new things, never stop growing. Growth does not just happen. You have to go after it!

## **Applying the Law of Intentionality to Your Life**

Now, which of the following have caused you to delay or neglect the growth you could probably have? From these choices, decide what strategies you can create to help you on how to bridge these gaps.

The Assumption Gap

The Knowledge Gap

The Timing Gap

The Mistake Gap

The Perfection Gap

The Inspiration Gap

The Comparison Gap

The Expectation Gap

Make a commitment to yourself to start growing TODAY. Try to rework your calendar by putting some appointments and schedule of your personal growth, may it be daily, weekly, or monthly.

### **Know Yourself To Grow Yourself**

Know yourself: your strengths and weaknesses, interests, and opportunities. Gauge where you have been to where you are now. Set a course for where you want to go. There are three kinds of people when it comes to having direction in life: people who do not know what they would like to do (often confused, lack strong sense of purpose, do not possess a sense of direction of their lives), people who know what they would like to do but do not do it (frustrated people, experience the gap between where they are and where they want to be everyday, fear prevents from changing course to pursue passion), and people who know what they would like to do and do it (possess a strong sense of passion, focused in purpose, grow in areas that help them move closer to their purpose). If you don't know yourself very well, you will remain unfocused in your growth. Explore yourself as you explore growth. Pay attention to your passion and purpose: faith, family, communication, and creativity.

People say that there are two important days in a person's life: the day you were born and the day you discover your purpose. Seek the reason why you were born and pursue it with all your effort.

### **Applying the Law of Awareness to Your Life**

- a. Ask these questions to yourself. Take your time answering them so that you can have a plan of action to follow when you are done.
  - i. Know what you would like to do.
  - ii. Identify the talents, skills, and opportunities you possess that can support your desire to do what you would like to do.
  - iii. Know your motives for wanting to do what you would like to do.
  - iv. Enumerate the steps must you take (beginning today) to start doing what you want to do.
  - v. Look for people who can give you advice to help you along the way of achieving what you would like to do.
  - vi. Know the price you are willing to pay: cost in time, resources, and sacrifices you are going to make for the things that you would like to do.

## **To Maximize Growth, Develop Strategies**

Plan and develop pro-strategic mind-set for your life and growth and try to develop a stronger sense of urgency for yourself. Here are some of the lessons in life that would probably help you in the process:

- a. Life is very simple but is difficult when you keep it that way. Project life as simple as possible.
- b. Design your life. It is more important than designing your career. If you plan your life well, the career will work itself out.
- c. Life does not have rehearsals! There is no warm up for your life so have yourself prepared. Do the best you can, in every moment.
- d. When planning your life, multiply everything (estimated time, effort, money, etc.) by two. When developing strategies for your growth, give yourself enough time and resources that you will need. Multiply everything by two.

## **Depend on Systems to Develop Your Strategies**

A system is a process for unsurprisingly achieving a goal which is based on an exact, systematic, repeatable principles and practices. It influences the time you can spend, money, and the abilities you have. Creating systems will help you accomplish something tactically on a regular basis. Spend time planning and preparing for the things you need to do or accomplish. Also, review your schedules and make sure to know what your plans are during the day or the incoming days. Systems lets you achieve extraordinary results predictably.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when creating your own system:

- Take the big picture into consideration. Then ask yourself: Will the system designed help you reach your big-picture goals?

- Know your priorities. Do you have a system which is consistent with your values and commitments?
- Include measurement/estimates: Can your system give you a tangible way to judge if you have already succeeded?
- Include application: Does your system have a built-in bias toward your action?
- Employ organization: Does your system make better use of your time than what you are doing now?
- Promote consistency – Can you easily repeat the system you have made on a regular or daily basis?

When seeking to developing strategies in maximizing your growth, also try to seek out some principles that have stood the test of time. You may customize someone else’s practices to your own.

### **When You Have No One Else but Yourself to Follow, it is Harder to Improve**

Who are you going to follow?

- a. Look for a mentor who is a worthy example. Search their personal lives as carefully as their public performances.
- b. Spend majority of your time with the mentors who are available, willing, and suited for the phase of your career. As you see your progress in your development, try to find new mentors for the new level of your growth.
- c. Find a mentor who has proven experience. Benefit from their experience and sought advice from them.
- d. Find a mentor who possesses good wisdom. Mentors who have good wisdom often show where to hit the mark. They have had enough understanding,

experiences, and knowledge to help you in solving the problems that you would probably have a hard time managing on your own.

- e. Find a mentor who provides friendship and support. They are the ones who can work unselfishly to reach your potential.
- f. Find a mentor who makes a difference in people's lives: the one who goes and shows the way. They help you grow, improve your potential, and increase your productivity.

Humble yourself and do not hesitate to ask advice from others. Asking from others would lead to greater knowledge and maturity development. People need each other. You will always need someone and someone will be needing you. It will not matter who you are, what are your accomplishments, or how low or how high your life has taken you. Having a mentor can benefit you a lot.

### **Growth Do Always Increase our Capacity**

There is no such thing as maximum capacity and potential as a person, if you are still alive and kicking. As long as you are alive, your capacity will always be increasing.

Here are Ways on How to Increase Your Thinking Capacity:

- a. Stop thinking about more work. It will not increase your capacity. Figure out what works. Focus on what you must do and what you really want to do.
- b. Do not ask yourself: "can I"? Instead, ask yourself this: "How can I?".
- c. Do not limit yourself into considering only "one door". Think about "many doors". It means that there are many ways to do something successfully.

To increase the capacity of your actions, stop doing those things that you have done before. Focus on doing those things you can do and you should do. Also, do what is more than expected and do important things daily.

To expand your capacity and impact, read more books, apply or adopt the lessons you have learned from it. Do not stop learning. Influence others and potentials will continue to expand. Our potentials keep on making progress until we die. Make use of these potentials implanted to you by God.

### **Qualities Every Good Leader Should Possess**

Every individual is unique in their own way. It is important that we consider that each individual must possess certain qualities in order to reach a common goal. Here are some key qualities that every good leader should possess (Forbes, 2012):

1. Honesty

Every team or business reflects to its leader, if you make yourself honest and ethical in the things you do, your team will follow suit.

2. Delegate

Trusting your team is a sign of strength. Delegating task to different people means that you trust their abilities and can help boost their confidence. It can also lessen your work load which could really help with your productivity.

3. Communication

Being able to describe clearly what you want from your team is a key element in working towards a common goal. Making yourself available in any way will help your team trust and depend on you and also help them work harder.

4. Confidence

As the leader, it is in your hands to keep the team relaxed and calm in times of downfalls. Your confidence will reassure everyone that everything will be fine by the end of the day if you also believe that. The objective is to keep everyone working and moving ahead.

## 5. Commitment

If you are committed in your line of work, your team will also feel the same commitment as you. You can surely gain the trust of your team when you work alongside as them.

## 6. Positive Attitude

Keep your team motivated and keep the energy levels up. There should be a fine line between productivity and playfulness. If the team is feeling happy, they would always look forward with even working the extra hours.

## 7. Creativity

As a leader, it's important to learn to think outside the box and to choose between choices. Some decisions will not always be clear-cut and that's where your creativity will make its entrance.

## 8. Intuition

Everything can be uncertain at times. Your team will ask for your guidance which your past experience could help but sometimes your gut instincts can give you answers. Learn to trust yourself too.

## 9. Inspire

Make the team see the vision you see for the company, in this way, the team will feel more invested with the accomplishments of the company. You should appreciate the hard work the team made to keep their spirits up.

## 10. Approach

Not all humans are the same. Individuals have each difference in order to function. You must know your employees well enough to know how you will approach them. You need to approach your team in accordance to the situation.

Women tend to process things differently than men. Their decision-making processes, personalities and other characteristics that only women sometimes possess. Women leaders clearly understand survival more than others. They are willing to fight for a thing that they believe is an opportunity to achieve something of significance. Women are opportunity driven. They live their life full of optimism as they see opportunities in everything. They can see things that often times others cannot. They use this moment to put on strategies to get things done.

Women are stereotyped as emotional leaders than men, but a better description would be passionate. When thing do not go their way, they always find ways to make things better. They want a genuine sense of control and order; they tend to be independent to find their own focus and to reach their goal.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **Sheliah McDaniel—the champion for Greatness**

“The family we’re born into isn’t always the family we cling on to for emotional support. Family and emotional support can come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and blood types. Often times it shows up in the form of people who are far removed from our own blood line. I believe that when crisis shows up in people’s lives, they look for emotional support wherever it feels safest. Sometimes it’s in blood relatives...sometimes it’s in a close friend(s)...sometimes it’s in complete strangers who we feel are equipped to deal with the situation at hand. As women, often times our safe place is buried deep within ourselves. As women, we are natural nurturers—both to our benefit and detriment. We have a tendency to spend our lives being strong for everyone else and chose not to “burden” others with the things we go through. That has been the story of my life. For the longest time I viewed discussing the things that I dealt with at any given time (past or present) as a weakness. I foolishly convinced myself that if I started sharing all of the pain packed away in my heart’s storage room; people would think I was weak. ‘It’s my job to be strong for everyone else...hold it together, so I can be the rock for my family.’ Does this sound familiar?”

“When I was 4 years old I was sexually abused by a close family member. I can remember the first time it happened like it was yesterday. At the time, my mom and dad were going through a divorce. My dad remained in the house that we knew as home, so we moved in with family. I don’t recall how long we had been there before the abuse started, but I remember all the kids would sleep in the front room on the floor. One night I remember being startled out of my sleep by the feeling of someone’s hand between my legs touching me in a way that felt very uncomfortable. I heard his voice say ‘Shhh, if someone wakes up you’re going to get in trouble for letting me do this. ‘So, I laid there frozen and scared. Scared of

what would happen next...scared of getting in trouble...scared of the world wind of emotions I was feeling. I could feel my body adjusting to his touches and I felt bad and dirty. I wanted to scream stop at the top of my lungs, but what if what he said was true and my mom would blame me? Finally my biggest fear was realized...the pain was unbearable and I began to cry. Someone must have shifted at the sound of my cry and he stopped. That went on regularly for what seemed like forever until we moved away. At the age of four, I had no emotional support to deal with the trauma of what was happening to me. I just went on about life like nothing was happening. From my view, our family was really close. I loved our family gatherings--listening to the memories of mishaps and mischief that wasn't funny when it happened, but was hilarious now that you look back. Hearing the laughter, feeling the love and connection that overshadowed us all being together was amazingly indescribable. How could I ruin that? If I told anyone what was going on, our family would never be the same and it would be my fault. I reasoned in my mind that the best thing to do was to suffer in silence. Now growing up, I've always heard someone or another describe me as having an 'old soul', but I seriously doubt that meant that I had the mental maturity to deal with the emotional trauma of being sexually molested. As a result, I developed an unhealthy view of what love was supposed to look like; which I carried with me all through the early part of my adult life. I believe I had the family and emotional support I needed at the time that it happened, the experience would have had less of a negative impact on how I coped with it throughout my life."

"When I was 21 years old I made the decision to seek emotional support from a close cousin. I did so because my marriage was becoming a casualty to the emotional baggage I was carrying around as a result of my childhood experience. In exposing my truth, I discovered that it happened to another one of our family members as well. She too had never told anyone until she found out it happened to me. Part of me felt relieved to have an 'ally' that could

validate that what happened to me was true because it happened to her. While it was helpful to know that I wasn't alone in dealing with what happened, that feeling was soon diminished by the feeling of betrayal. My cousin was, and still very passionate about family being open and honest with one another. When things go wrong, all she wants to do is fix it...get it out in the open and talk about it. But I wasn't ready for that yet. I just wanted emotional support in dealing with the reality of what happened. My cousin felt it was important to express what happened to my mom and deal with the situation head on. So, she gave me an ultimatum—either I tell my mom what happened, or she would have to. I didn't want my mother to hear it from anyone else, so I told her. Unfortunately, my mother wasn't equipped to provide the support I needed either. Her focus became less about dealing with my personal trauma and more about convincing me to forgive my perpetrator for what he did as a method of healing. Emotional support from my family no longer felt like support at all. As I mentioned previously, family and emotional support can come in variety of forms to include individuals that don't carry your bloodline. Family that we are born into are not always the best means of support even though they mean well. While my cousin meant well she didn't understand that emotional support has nothing to do with the supporter's idea of what is best. Emotional support is about providing a place for the person in distress to feel valued, safe and understood in dealing with whatever is at hand. Needless to say, I shutdown again and closed myself off from my family emotionally. What I did not do, however, was stop seeking the support I needed for my emotional healing. In the end, I found a great counselor that was equipped to handle what I was going through and provided me with the emotional support required to heal.”

“Now you may be saying, ‘Sheliah, my baggage isn't that heavy...’ Well, regardless of whether it's major, minor, or somewhere in between, if you're breathing you have upsets, distresses, and hurts. It may not seem significant or have what you feel is a lasting impact, but

they are a major determinant of your mood and psychosocial well-being. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians (2016), weakened immune system, headaches, high blood pressure, insomnia, palpitations, sexual problems, weight gain or loss, and general aches and pains are just a few health related ailments caused by poor emotional health. All too often, we put all of our focus into nurturing others that we forget to nurture ourselves. You cannot live in your greatness with baggage weighing you down. You may be saying, 'That's not true, I'm doing just fine with my baggage. I don't need anyone. I'm a successful career woman...my children are successful adults...my marriage is doing just fine...I'm well liked in the community...ask anyone, they will tell you I am confident and know where I'm going in life...' and so on. I would challenge you examine yourself a little deeper. Who we are fundamentally is derived from our life's experiences. If we are unable to deal with the reality of circumstances that make up who we are, we are unable to own the truth about who we are. If we aren't willing to own the truth about who we are, we are unable to make the necessary adjustments (self-leadership) to become great in our intended purpose. As a result, we go through life existing in our self-deception instead of living in our intended purpose. Here are a few action steps you can take to start your emotional healing through a healthy family and emotional support system:

- First, acknowledge your feelings and the need for healing. If you are like me, you may be in a bit of denial about your emotions and how they impact your daily life. However, in order for you to begin the healing process you have to accept there are wounds to heal.
- Second, give yourself permission to open up about your feelings. Seeking emotional support is NOT a show of weakness. It takes strength to open up to others about things that hurt us because it requires us to be vulnerable in the moment. Think about it from the standpoint of you being the support for someone

that you love and care about. Do you see them as weak when they come to you seeking emotional support? The truth is we tell ourselves sharing is a weakness to create a barrier around the wound.

- Third, build a strong emotional network. You are more likely to deal with the upsets, distresses, and hurts that you encounter when you have a strong emotional support system in place. This can be relatives, friends, your church community, a co-worker you trust, etc. You can also try a social focus group whose goals and objectives are in line with the resources you need to manage good emotional health. Remember, family and emotional support comes in a variety of packages.”

## **The Best Lesson You Can Teach is the Example You Lead**

“The best leaders lead by example. I’m sure we’ve all heard the phrase ‘actions speak louder than words,’ right? Given any scenario where you have to judge the situation based on something an individual says vs. what they do, judgement of the action will always take precedence over the contradicting words. As women, we set the tone in our homes and in our families. As such, it is important that we set the example for those taking direction from what they see exuding from us.

Growing up as a child, I could remember feeling frustrated with adults and their hypocrisy. I didn’t understand why the rules didn’t apply to them the way they forced them on us as children. It wasn’t until I had my first child that I understood the why behind the rules we set for our children. I began to understand that as a parent all we want to do is protect our children from as many of life’s hurts and pains as we can. Our biggest hope is that they grow up to be successful, responsible adults capable of doing anything they set their minds to, with minimal setbacks as possible. Along with that understanding, I also carried with me the feeling associated with the hypocrisy of the example that screamed ‘Do as I say, not as I do.’ I decided that in raising my children, I would not do that to them. As I studied their behaviours, I discovered that innately children are what I call ‘example’ learners. They learn by watching and listening to their parents and it starts at birth. I am more so aware of this with my second generation kids than my first. When my 3 year old was 2, I noticed that his yes answers came out as ‘mmhmm’ or ‘yeah’. Every time I heard him respond that way I would correct him—‘Don’t say mmhmm. Say, yes Ma’am or yes, Sir.’ That went on for what seemed like a never-ending cycle. I couldn’t understand for the life of me, why no matter how many times I corrected him, he still would not say ‘Yes, Ma’am or yes, Sir.’ Finally, one day he asked me a yes or no question and my yes answer came out as ‘mmhmm.’ Without

skipping a beat, he said ‘No Mommy. Say yes, Ma’am or yes, Sir.’ In that moment, I realized that it wasn’t that he didn’t understand what I was saying in correcting him. His observation of how I answered yes spoke louder to him than the direction I gave for him to correct his yes responses. Once I made a conscious effort to lead by example and answer yes, Ma’am or yes, Sir .He began to do the same.”

“My youngest brother could act out a scene from any movie like he was chosen for the part as early as the age of 3 years old. I remember there was this movie titled *Disorderlies*. My brother could act out every scene in this movie, but there was one particular scene that had to have been his favourite. He would always act it out. In the scene, the character in the movie dropped the four letter ‘S’ bomb in the heat of anger, but my 3-year-old brother knew to replace it with ‘crap’. I remember the first time he ever repeated the lines. He was sitting on my mother’s lap. We all stopped with anticipation to hear whether or not he was going to say the ‘bad’ word, but he replaced it with a substitute. He had never said a curse word before and gotten in trouble for it, so it wasn’t learned through trial and error. My mom was amazed along with us that he knew to replace the curse word. As I look back on that small moment in my life, I recognized that my mother never cursed at us. No matter how angry she got, she never used a curse word in her conversations with us. It was her example that gave my brother the lesson in cursing.”

“This concept is not solely for parenting. It should be applied to every area of our lives. Leading by example should be a fundamental characteristic of who we are. There’s a popular saying among the religious community— ‘The best sermon you can preach is the life you live.’ That’s because people care more about what you do than what you say. I have never known anyone to say they admire the hypocrisy in others. However, I hear quite frequently the disdain for hypocrites. You see the lack of leading by example quite often in the

workplace. We have all had supervisors or managers that barked at the amount of time we spend socializing or surfing the internet at work, but observe them frequently spending his or her time chatting with other managers about the newest and hottest social media post that graced their computer screen? When leaders force standards upon others that they don't live up to themselves, they erode the trust needed from those who follow them.”

“I had a great working relationship with an old boss. I spent a lot of time in her office discussing both work and non-related topics. Often times, the conversations would begin with something work related, then digress to other topics like family, headline news, relationships, etc. One day my boss pulled me into her office and expressed to me that she noticed there was too much socializing over non-work related topics taking place between some of the employees under me. She felt they were always away from their desk and work didn't appear to be getting done. Like any good manager, I began to observe the team members that was called out more closely. In my observations, I found that the individuals in question did spend an excessive amount of time away from their desk socializing with other team members. So, I had a meeting with each of them individually to address the boss' concerns. 'It's been brought to my attention that you're spending excessive amounts of time away from your desk socializing with other team members. While, it's important that you take a break from the strenuous work in front of you, I want to ensure that you remain productive as well as the team. Please limit the amount of time spent socializing during work hours.' I gave the same speech to each team member and it was met with no resistance. 'Yes, Ma'am. I understand,' was the typical response. I reported back to the boss that the situation was taken care of, and she should see an immediate change in behavior. A few weeks went by and as promised there had been a change in their behavior. I must have been really effective because the entire team had seemed to become more focused. There was much less socializing and more time spent pushing out work, but the open dialogue between me and the team had diminished. So, I

called a meeting to address the issue. ‘There appears to be a disconnect between us. I noticed that some of you have become a bit closed off. Is there any problems or concerns you all would like to discuss in an effort to clear the air?’ Silence...no one said a word. ‘Listen, you all know that I have an open-door policy that includes no retribution. I try to create a safe space for you to provide constructive feedback. Until now, our team has worked well together and we are pretty open about the challenges that come up. We cannot change what we do not acknowledge.’ Finally, someone spoke up, ‘There has been some conversation among the team regarding double standards towards socializing at work. We’re expected to stay at our desk and push out work all day while you’re seen laughing and joking in the boss’ office quite frequently. There have been times that we need your input to maintain productivity, but you’re socializing somewhere else.’ I was stunned. I had lost the trust of my team because I was not setting the example. I was saying one thing, but doing another.”

“Leading by example is no easy feat to say the least, but there are steps you can take to grow in this area. It takes discipline, commitment, and personal accountability. You must show discipline in consciously evaluating your actions against the rules you set for others, and commit to making adjustments where needed. In order to start the process here’s some steps you should take:

- Be truthful to both yourself and others. You cannot grow if you are unwilling to be honest with yourself about what others already know in their experiences with you. If you are hearing consistent feedback from multiple sources in their description of you, don’t discount it because it goes against the image you would like to have of yourself. In order to stop getting what you’ve been getting, you have to stop doing what you’ve been doing. That requires honest self-reflection.

- Acknowledge failure. When you are willing to acknowledge and express your failures, it sends the message that you are human. It helps others to see that failure is not to be feared, but it's a normal part of the process.
- Take responsibility. Holding yourself accountable to taking responsibility for the areas where you have displayed hypocrisy is crucial. If I had begun to make excuses and blame others for calling me out on the carpet for my lack of leadership it would have cost me my credibility with my team. The same holds true in each one of our day to day relationships with others.”

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Meet Cheryl Harris Sutton - Ambassador of Hope, From Survival to Purpose**

“I am a woman of God, mentor, coach, communicator, career professional with more than 30 years of mid to senior level managerial and leadership experience, an entrepreneur and an ambassador of hope. I am also a wife, mother, sister, friend and leader. Who I am today is the accumulation of the myriad of experiences and relationships I have had throughout my life. I have experienced great accomplishments as well as great disappointments and failures. Each have been vital in my development and growth process. With each accomplished, I have learned the importance of having a vision, setting goals, prioritizing and staying the course. I have learned to stretch myself beyond my perceived capabilities and to discover my untapped potential. With each disappointment and failure, I have learned to embrace and evaluate the outcome, make adjustments and to persevere. Although some of my disappointments and failures have felt like insurmountable concrete mountains, it is in the perseverance that my character has been truly tested and refined. My accomplishments, disappointments and failures have enabled me to transform my life’s journey from one of simply getting by and surviving life to one of fulfilment of my purpose. I can say with certainty that I am now stronger, wise and better.”

“My personal and professional growth is important to me and so I continually invest in myself. This has enabled me to clearly define and sharpen my areas of strength. I am teachable. I have a growth mindset and I am able to influence others towards the accomplishment of a common goal. I am a strategic thinker and I typically excel when I blend my strong drive to reach goals with my desire for precision, accuracy, and quality.”

“Just as embracing and evaluating my disappointments and failures has been important to development, understanding my areas of growth has also been important. One of my greatest opportunities for growth is the area of connecting with others. As one who is highly task oriented, while I do successfully work with others, I can sometimes get too comfortable working alone and may neglect to spend the time necessary for establishing and building relationships.”

“My experiences, relationships, areas of strength and growth have enabled me to define my core values, which are the guiding principles for both my personal and professional life. These core values describe the very essence of who I am. and describe the foundation on which my leadership development are guided. It is my desire that in all that I do, I will **Glorify God**, operate with a spirit of **Integrity**, be a **Faithful** steward, effectively utilize the **Talents**, skills and creativity with which I have been blessed, provide **Excellent** leadership, coaching and mentoring and demonstrate my **Dedication** to fulfilment of my purpose (GIFTED).”

“My leadership style is that of a builder. As a builder, I enjoy responding to challenges that require creativity and managing projects that allows me an opportunity to make a real difference. I have enjoyed both personal and professional leadership successes. I believe my words inspire others. I believe my actions have a positive impact on others and help others move toward the fulfilment of their personal goals and God-given purpose. This belief has been essential to my own continued growth and development as well as to my continued pursuit of my purpose.”

“I believe leadership is the excavator of hope. Why? Good leadership seeks to motivate and uplift others. It seeks to break up those areas of poorly utilized and untapped potential. Good leadership digs deep and challenges us and those around to know and understand our

existence. Good leadership helps us to see the vision and understand the important role we can play in our society.”

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Meet Tocarra Steele – Author of ‘From Lifeless to Leader: Her Story of Victory**

“I am more than a woman. I am more than a leader. I am a friend, sister, empowerment speaker, God-mother, fighter, survivor, mentor, daughter, director, an author. What does it mean to be a woman? This is a question to ponder on with an answer which has much meaning. It means a lot to me however it may not mean much to others, why...the individual walk of a woman is different for every woman. Even though there may be many similarities, the density for each woman is what sets us apart. What makes me different from the next woman? So glad you asked...two words; purpose and destination. How do you define purpose and destination within your own life?”

“Here are the different seasons within my life which caused me to transition from being ‘lifeless to being a leader’. One concept I know to be sure in reference to being a leader is this, each season is different than the next. The role of a leader is more than a role; it’s a lifestyle full of commitments.”

### ***The Sea of Black and Blue***

“For a few seasons within my life, all I saw was black and blue. These spots were either on my thighs, arms and legs depending on the situation which caused my ex-boyfriend to choose me as his victim. I was in a dark place as I allowed for Domestic Violence to rule my world. This is one subject which many women deal with, however many women fail to mention, let alone share with others, especially women. Oftentimes, women are either ashamed or scared to talk about how they are, or have been exposed to domestic violence. As women, especially leaders, it is important for us to share our experiences not to just provide and receive support, however to share to allow each other know we are not alone. Domestic Violence isn’t

something we beg to receive as women. There were many times when I thought many women who stayed with men who beat them were so dumb and foolish. I looked at these women differently, even found myself judging these women from time to time for I truly didn't understand why a woman would accept such a situation. I viewed women who allowed themselves to take a float in the sea of black and blue to be absolutely weak. One concept I adopted as I went through these seasons of my life was to 'never ever say never'. Although there were times when I wanted to leave the situation, I was too weak to move and too scared to leave my ex- boyfriend. I found myself watching and listening to the many stories of women who allowed their bodies to be abused as their minds were taking hits as well. When I think of the value and purpose of how women were created, the last situation which women should be exposed to is domestic violence. What many fail to realize is domestic violence often reference to as 'DV' is one which is more than a physical act. DV comes to attack our bodies, minds and souls. DV can take place through the most common offenses, in the physical sense. The mental sense comes into play when a victim is abused through words. When we tend to think of DV, it is more than being in a relationship with someone and experiences these violations."

For me, I really didn't think I would ever share my stories of how I overcame domestic violence, the nasty sea of black and blue. For years, I couldn't believe I allowed myself to become so sick in the brain to think the way I was being treated by my ex-boyfriend was fair and true to me as the precious woman I am. Being honest, I lost my value, self-worth for some seasons of my life due to my 'love' for a man who I thought loved me. Instead, when he taught me was how to love myself even more as he continued to abuse me. However, it wasn't until later that I learned to love myself. I didn't see the love for self when I was stuck rowing in the sea of black and blue. I can remember there being times when I was getting ready to go out with my friends and my ex wouldn't approve of my outfit. One night, I was

fed up and I didn't care if he liked it or not. Well, my fly outfit didn't gain the approval according to him. I remember arguing about the shirt, I had on. He threatened me to take the shirt off and I didn't. The next thing I knew he had me in mid-air as he pulled my shirt off of me and I fell on the floor next to my bed. I couldn't believe this man ripped my shirt off of me. I didn't know to be madder at the fact he placed his hands on me or the fact he ripped one of my favourite shirts. I couldn't believe how this man was so adamant about what I wore out. We finished arguing and I simply went to my closet to put on the same shirt he just ripped off of me in a different colour. He couldn't believe that I was so adamant about wearing my outfit. Of course, the real reason he was having such a fit was that I was fly, first and foremost. And second, he was so jealous of me going out without him after he said he was going to do his own thing. And third, he was so jealous of me being around other men for he knew how attractive I was, even though he use to tell me how ugly and fat I was. Lastly, he was cheating on me and thought I was doing the same. Finally we agreed on something. I was cheating myself, my worth by staying in a relationship with my ex. However, I didn't have the strength to leave. Well, now I need to ask myself, was he really cheating on me because I knew about the side pieces (there were many of them) and still wanted him around. I think this is a question for another story, another time and most defiantly another place. As I started to become to my senses, I realized I had been cheating myself the time I spent with him knowing better. It was then when I started to realize my worth at a slow rate. This wasn't my first rodeo with this man. He was one who would often tell me, 'you are a bald-headed bitch and if I don't want you, no one else will.' Or, I heard, 'you are really fat and you need to do something about that.' There was a time when he came down to visit me for I was attending the University of Illinois and he lived near the Chicagoland area. The distance was about an hour and a half as there were many times when he would get off at 2am and come straight from work to spend days with me, so I thought. At

this time in my life, I really thought I knew what ‘love’ really was. I realized the relationship I had with this man had no ounce of love in its DNA. And still, I thought it was something I was doing or wasn’t doing. I thought it could be fixed if only I did what he told me to do. I blamed myself for the way he acted. I thought I was the reason why he chose to have relationships with other women. Yes, I said relationships. I thought I was the only one he was dating. It wasn’t until one day when he was taking a shower; I unlocked his phone since I heard the code so many times before. I unlocked his phone and saw the many names of the females I knew weren’t family members or close friends. I made a list of the numbers and placed the piece of paper in a winter coat way in the back of my closet since it was spring time. When he got out of the shower, I treated him no different. It wasn’t until when he left later that day I started calling these girls to ‘let them know who I was.’ I was bold and wanted answers, plus I was 19 at the time. I found out one young lady had an abortion by him. I found out he took another young lady to prom instead of taking me to my prom. And, this young lady had been dating him off and on the entire time we were dating which was 3 years or so.”

“There was another time when my ex and I were arguing, which led to him putting his hands on me again. This time I thought I was going to lose my life. He climbed on top of me and placed a pillow over my face. He started saying things like, ‘I was going to die today,’ and things of that nature. I was fighting trying to get him off of me. And then, I just stopped fighting him and just laid there. I pretended like he was taking my life. I laid still and stopped breathing long enough for him to get off of me. When I got up, I started fighting him back as I was getting closer and closer to the door. He then told me how sorry he was again. He said he didn’t know what got into him and how he loved me. I didn’t know who I was. I had no sense of self-worth. I didn’t know my purpose in life. At the time I was 19 and just knew I wanted to be loved by someone other than my family. See, I didn’t have my father in my life

who was supposed to be the leader of the house. I thought love was the sea of black and blue because at the end of the day, I knew my ex-boyfriend loved me. At the same time, I didn't realize that I needed to love myself. I didn't realize I was a leader in the making. I didn't value leadership like I should. However, if I valued leadership back then, would I have gone through this experience which has truly impacted the leader I am now? There are times when we say we wish 'this' didn't happen. And, if 'that' didn't happen, then 'this' would be different. One concept I have learned over the years is everything truly happens for a reason. There are some situations which must occur for the further development of humans. There are many other stories I can share like when my ex-boyfriend told him he had a baby on the way. Or the story on how he held a knife to my face as I refused to cook him dinner since he was cheating on me, openly. There are times when I could have left, should have left, had the right to leave, and just couldn't. As much as I wanted to leave, it would either result of the two of us to have even a greater argument which led to him beating or throwing me around. I just couldn't leave as much as I tried because I wasn't strong then. I needed to go through those things and more to gain the strength of the leader I am today.”

“I remember there was a point in my life when I was so ashamed of the fact I let a man beat me and talk to me any kind of way. There was a time when I couldn't believe I loved this man too. There was a time when I couldn't believe I altered my life for this man. Now, I know and truly believe those seasons in my life were to make me stronger, wiser, better and for sure not bitter. And, the same can easily be said for all of you leaders reading these stories, especially those of you who have been through this as well. One thing I can say about being a leader, rough storms and seasons will come. One thing about a storm and a season is that they can never stay. Storms have to end and seasons must shift.”

“When I think of these stories, I can now see how the leader in me was being developed. OK...I hear someone asking, ‘how can you see something good out of this bad situation?’ When you can go back and thank the man or women who hurt you, this is true freedom. As a leader, I learned what I go through isn’t for me; it’s for me to share my stories to pay it forward. Also as a leader, it’s not about what comes our way it’s all about how we handle it. As I was writing this chapter, I reached out to my ex-boyfriend who I mention during this chapter to inform him of this book project. Even after 15 years has passed by, he hasn’t forgiven himself for his actions even though I have. And let me be very honest, there are some situations I could have handled better than others. And, know I learned from those lessons as well. Everything we do is for the moulding, shaping and alignment as we are always evolving as leaders. There never comes a point where we reach our max potential. It just doesn’t happen. Potential as leaders is an element which must be achieved to understand our purpose and callings within lives, however especially as women leaders. With this being said, there is no way we can never max out when it comes to being a leader who is operating in true leadership. With these being said, even if we have a moment when we float in the sea of black and blue, there is still much purpose and promise in this pain which tends to develop the leader within us even the more.”

***As You Strive to Grow Nuggets:***

- Take time to review the “Ready, Set, JOT” section as a reminder to value YOU!
- If you feel you are a victim of Domestic Violence, seek the help need to rescue yourself from the situation you are in.
- Know being in a domestic violence situation doesn’t make you weak, less desirable, crazy, stupid, dumb or anything of that nature.

- Remember even the bad, most especially the bad always works out for your good.

***A Woman's Worth: I AM WOMAN***

“Have you grasped on how valuable you are? Just think...you are a woman, think of the many aspects of our lives which clearly set us apart from me. Women bear children. Women are the backbones to every family. Women are mothers. Women tend to be some of the best nurturers. When you think of ‘a woman’s worth’ when describing yourself what comes to your mind? Ready, Set, JOT:

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_

Of these three words, you chose to use to describe your worth, think about how you are currently applying these words/concepts within your life, and if you aren’t, make a plan to start doing so. It can be as simple as posting quotes in your favourite place you choose to get ready in the morning before heading to work, to the gym, or your favourite breakfast spot. Whatever this looks like for you, remember you chose these words to describe your worth. And, the great concept about this exercise is you can use it as much or as little as you would like. It’s is a tool of self- acknowledgment as well as self- empowerment.

What does it mean for a woman to know her worth? Does it mean she knows that she is far more valuable than rubies? Does it mean she knows that she is a queen? Does she understand there is no person in the world that can’t make her feel like less of a woman? Now, think of yourself, which you may or may not do often. The time has come to concentrate on you for

just a moment before reading more. THINK... What are three characteristics you enjoy and love most about being a woman?

Ready, Set, JOT:

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_

Was this difficult or hard? Any way it goes, ‘great job’ for this can be a challenge to accomplish, honesty. Now, this may have been easier for some than others. As women, most of the times, we are so focused on others, we really don’t make the necessary time to truly evaluate, assesses and process who we are PERIOD. Ok, let try this. Jot down three things which come to your mind when you think about, ‘a woman’s worth?’

Ready, Set, JOT:

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_

Now, these exercises can be really hard for me too. So, if you struggled, no worries. If you didn’t complete this exercise, guess what...this is your book so you can come back to this exercise anytime. A woman who knows her worth is a priceless woman! Yes, I will say this again. A woman who knows her worth is a priceless woman! Priceless, is the word I chose. There is no price tag on this planet which can begin to come close to the worth you possess as a woman. One concept to keep in mind in relationship is the power of your words. Words truly shape your world. And as women, our world is everything to us. In different stages of

our lives our worlds will share and evolve. For example, I am a single woman with no children. Right now, I am working on me and making sure I am doing everything God has called me to do while I am single. Now, for the married woman, your world looks different from mine at the moment. However one common theme will always remain. As women, our words are truly powerful. They can be used to hurt or help. They can be used to empower or demolish. The choice is truly ours. However, when you are a women leader, the importance and power of our words must soar to the next level. As women leaders, we have many obstacles which clearly do not work in our favour on one hand. However when you look at your obstacles through the lenses of a leader, all things work for the good. As women leaders especially, we face glass ceiling issues on a daily basis. According to society, we can only excel to a 'certain' place within different sectors. According to the most high, there is not an obstacle big enough in which we can't conquer. For women leaders are warriors, full of courage at that. We are seen as powerful beings however treated as 'less than' when we are truly 'more than'. As women, we can be seen as hot heads from time to time, therefore the importance of taming our words and remaining poise however powerful is key.

There were so many times in my life when I was treated in a manner which didn't reflect the girl or woman I was. As a little girl, there were times when my family called me stupid and dumb. They didn't mean any harm as it was a way of pushing me to make realize how smart I was at an early age. I started reading at the age of 3. I was reading the Chicago Sun Times at the age of 6. In the second grade I was in the Gifted Program as well as identified as young author and inventor. However, these words still hurt very bad, especially coming from my family. I brought this pain into my adult years carrying this pain of being called, 'stupid and dumb'. The way I saw i was not b qualified to be the person I was identified as, during my early school years. There were times as an adult when I found myself looking to quit a task as the words from my childhood being called 'stupid and dumb' rang louder than anything

around me. The way I viewed myself was blurred for a very long time. A lot of this was due to the many things I went through during my childhood into my college years. I remember being one of the only blacks, yet alone females in pre-school all the way through high school years. There were times when I was teased for the colour of my skin or for the way I talked since I talk 'proper' as I am often told. My family in the south would always tease me for the way I talked. I talked 'different' according to them. I was trying to act as if I was better than them, according to the way they would treat me when I spent summer in the south with my family. After a while, there were times when I would try to be more like them since they didn't like who I was. I didn't understand I was compromising my self-worth for the sake of my family members not being comfortable on who they were until later when I became an adult. As a child, I grew up in predominately Caucasian neighbourhood. I remember being called a 'nigger,' and 'black porch monkey,' as I simply wanted to be a child who could ride her bike in the neighbourhood or play on the playground during recess not having to worry about my skin colour being different than the next person. There were times when I was left out because my daddy wasn't around at all as I was growing up. There were the father-daughter outings which left me very sad for my father wasn't around and choose the streets instead of me. All of the life events I mentioned above truly had an effect on me. For the longest time, I allowed for these life events to define me in a negative way. Until one day...it happened! The light bulb of positivity went off and ever since then, I have allowed all life events to mould, shape and keep me on the path of where I am heading. I finally met the meaning of self-worth no matter what others said about me. I began to have a greater respect and understanding of who I was. As a leader, there are many times when life events will make you want to fold on this path we call, LIFE! Folding is not an option simply because failure is not an option, especially when you are a leader. When failure speaks within our lives, choose to speak LIFE. Self-worth is a positive tool of self-reflection as a leader,

especially as a woman leader. Failure is an opportunity for life to speak louder than ever. If I could count the times I tried to give up, it would blow your minds, simply because it blows my mind. I can't even remember the many times I wanted to give up and I just couldn't. For me, I thought how leaders truly don't give up or give in to the many challenges we face. As leaders, it is the falling which makes us stronger when we get back up. If you don't ever fall, how do you know what it takes to gain the strength to move forward? It is in my down times when I have realized even the more how I need to stay in the game and finish strong. Besides the point, let's be real, throwing in the towel is easier to do, however there are so many rewards with successfully completing your task, assignment and call as leader. Your worth and value as a woman, as a leader trumps any failing moment you will have and ever had. This is why it is important for you to truly love and embrace your worth as women, especially as a leader. Yes, I said 'love'. Here is why it is important to love you; if you don't love you and adore your worth, first and foremost, how can you expect anyone else to? Also, loving you and adoring your worth allows you to fully execute purpose, for purpose makes this much easier. THINK...some of you may have a job which you don't like however, you need to provide for your family, right? Now, think if you had a job which allowed for you to operate in purpose, for purpose, what would be your response?"

"I remember there was a time when I couldn't stand to look at myself in the mirror. When I looked at myself, I looked at my shame, my failures and how I truly treated myself as a whole. Often when I am speaking at conferences and events, I mention the importance of mirrors and women. Yes, most women love mirrors. However, there are times when mirrors are our worst enemies. A mirror allows for you to see everything and I do mean everything. As a woman who doesn't know her worth, she will see a mirror as a judging tool instead of an empowerment tool. Your self-worth comes down to a very easy and common denominator, YOU!"

***As You Strive to Grow Nuggets:***

- Take time to review the “Ready, Set, JOT” section as a reminder of your worth.
- Post quotes around your house, office, in your car, in your face reminding you about your worth as a woman.
- Read books speaking on your worth as woman
- Engage in healthy conversations with other women and men to gain a greater appreciation of your worth
- Take the time to speak and pour into yourself on a daily basis. This can be done by reading daily affirmations or something of this matter.

***My Purpose is My Identity***

When you think of the word “purpose,” in relation to identity what comes to your mind?

Ready, Set, JOT:

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_

Ok, if you weren't able to fully complete this challenge, guess what, make sure you come back to this page when you can. Let this exercise be a reminder of what purpose in relation to what identity means to you.

“When I think of the word, ‘purpose’, in relation to identity, three words which come to mind for me are: process, calling, and passion. I had to learn I am not just Toccara Nicole Steele. I am a woman of strength, courage, power, worth, beauty, intelligence, and the list goes on. Now, let me be all the way transparent with you, I have not always been in the place of

knowing my purpose is my identity. For me, it wasn't until I became 30 in 2012 going into 2013 when I gained a more broad understanding of my purpose even the more. When I became 30, the first 6 months were hell. It was one blow after another after another. Looking back now, these blows were designed not only to take me out, however they were created for me to never arrive to where I am now. Every time I picked myself up and dusted myself off, I was hit with yet another powerful blow which then again took me down for the count. It wasn't until June of 2012 when things started coming around for me. Let me rewind, on New Year's Eve, I was in a fatal car accident on my way home from Watch Night Service. Due to this accident, on the first of the month for 6 months straight, I was reminded of this accident which tormented my life. My birthday was on January 14, mind you, I turned 30 that year. Then, I found out my dad was incarcerated yet once again, this time for a crime which was unbelievable and false. Next, I lost my job which provided me more security in who I 'thought I was' and where I thought all of my identity lied. When I lost my job, the title disappeared along with the responsibilities. I was lost for months. I faked the funk for so long and made people thought I was fine. Let the truth be told, I was truly depressed and had no clue on who I was, at all. I also was wrestling with the fact my father was incarcerated again and then the car accident which started off my year, literally. I couldn't even celebrate the fact I turned 30 which is supposed to be a time of celebration for most due it being a milestone birthday. During this time of not working, I started working out to pass the time. I am not a lazy person so sitting in the house doing nothing didn't work well for me. It was during this time when I started to take time to be with myself and learn me all over again. How many of you can honestly say you have taken time to learn who you were for no one but yourself? Self-discovery is one of the best types of discovery. I was able to read books to strengthen and renew my mind because I was weak. I was depleted, and at the same time I found more time for supporting others with their issues than spending all of this time working

on my own issues. Needless to say, it was during my low places where my identity and purpose both were screaming my name. As leaders, we go through low seasons which make the climbing to the high seasons more worth the effort.”

***As You Strive to Grow Nuggets:***

- Take time to review the “Ready, Set, JOT” section as a reminder of your journey.
- Never compare your journey to the next person’s journey.
- Your identity sets you apart from the rest.
- Know that failures and shortcomings occur as you are on the journey of evolving.

***Launched Out and Made It***

“Being a leader is more than a role, it is a lifestyle. It’s more than having a fancy title for others to identify you as. It is a responsibility and is one which many admire. However, they have not a clue what it takes to be the leader you have been created to be. Leaders take risks. Leaders tend not to play it safe all of the time. Leaders take chances and understand with these chances there are times when failure occurs. When failure occurs, many choose to give up and throw in the towel, including leaders from time to time. Let’s think! As a leader, when was the last time you took a risk? Did it work? If not, why? When you think of the word “launch” what does this mean for you?”

Ready, Set, and Let’s JOT!

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_

“One concept to know about a leader is they never give up. No matter how much they desire to give up, it’s never the last option. One concept to remember as a leader, one just doesn’t arrive to a place and says, ‘Here I am!’ ‘All eyes on me, you see!’ ‘You better pay attention to me because I am indeed a leader so watch out now!’ Ummmm...it doesn’t quite happen that way. And for those leaders who use the quotes I mentioned or something on the lines of this, they need to re-evaluate the lifestyle and importance of being a leader.”

“As a leader, I can think of many times when I took the plunge either for the sake of a professional move or either for the sake of my team. I can remember with each plunge I took, it was done with great skill and seeking wisdom of those who were more experienced than I was. One concept I learned about being a leader is that I don’t know everything. In order to be a good leader, one must know and fully accept the responsibility of being a good follower. Think of one who serves in the role of an understudy for plays. This person is prepared to take the lead role due to them knowing the role of the leader. They follow their every move. They study every line. They are the shadow. When one chooses to follow a leader, they know their every move. One main difference between a follower and a leader is: a leader is not a follower. Once a follower, the forward progression and then next step is being a leader.”

“Back in 2015, I received an opportunity out of a life time. I wasn’t looking for it and it fell in to my lap out of nowhere. Let me give the backdrop. Back in 2012, I lost my job. When I lost my job, I didn’t know I would receive a complete career change. I started working for a state agency within the state of Illinois, where I reside. I loved my career change and I took chances after chances as I searched to change the many opportunities I had with the agency. One concept I learned as a leader was, you never know when others are watching you. Therefore your character and the way you carry yourself is truly important. Fast forwarding, I was attending a meeting for my job when I was asked by the director of the division to chat

with her once I had a moment. When I had a moment, I went to chat with her. She mentioned her and another director have been watching the way I execute as a leader since day one when I started. They wanted to make sure I was made aware of a new position being posted within the division. The day I was made known of the position was the deadline to apply for the position. I had no time to process if it was something I really wanted to do or not. One concept to keep in mind when you are a leader, you are always ready for the 'next'. I always keep my resume updated along with my references. Preparation is everything when you are a leader. As a leader, you never know when you will be needed to take one for the team. Did I mention a leader is a team player, even when they don't 'feel' like it? One concept to keep in mind as a leader, if one allows their feelings to overrule their life, there may be opportunities missed due to allowing your feelings to lead instead of you leading your feelings. I took the plunge and applied for the position. There were times when I found myself doubting if I was good enough to even apply for such a position. I found myself in a place of doubt due to the challenges this new opportunity presented. After I took the time to perform a self-soul check, I realized that I was more than good enough for the opportunity. I realized I was not the follower any more, I was the leader. I was one who was taking chances and not afraid of the word, 'no'. This is a powerful word which has the ability to instil fear within the lives of leaders. As a leader, we move and shake with which comes our way. The word 'no' can be seen as a deal breaker, a form of disappointment and even times, a form of rejection. I received an interview for the position and I have been in the position I applied for since December 2015. I truly love my career even when the challenging moments stare me in the face. I have realized the good outweighs the bad, any day. There is more, with taking this new career move it caused me to make a physical move. In order to be closer to my new headquarters, I chose to move from a city where I was made, molded, shaped, matured from a girl who moved to this city when graduating from high school to arriving to a new place in

my womanhood. I realized I was leaving the city where I moved to not knowing anyone and anything. I lived in this one city for over 15 years. It is in this city where I attended college, developed as woman, developed as a Christian, matured as a woman and found out who I was. I created many lifelines in this city. I was so scared, yes fearful of the world of the unknown. You would have thought I was moving across the country. I was only moving an hour and fifteen minutes away however I didn't know what to expect. How many of you can easily relate to going from knowing to the unknown can be a very scary place? As a leader, it is important to have a circle, a tribe, a team of people who can provide you with sound wisdom without any motives. As I was preparing to move to this city, I saw the Most High was making everything new for me. There were many times when I was trying to talk myself out of moving to this new city. I had to leave my friends, my family, my church, my memories I created. I was so nervous. When the Most High started connecting the dots for me, it was my sign I was making the right moves to accept this new placement, foundation which was being built for me. How many of you can witness when you are a leader, there are many times when the fight isn't with other people, it is with yourself? As I kept moving forward with this move, it became easier. I remember when I was waiting to receive my start date for my new position and I knew when I wanted to be moved out of my old place. I started packing my house. I hired a moving company and found a new place in my new city. I was so bold where I placed a deposit for my new house, vacated my old house and still hadn't received the new start date of my new position. I truly stepped out on faith knowing the Most High had my back, and God did! When I moved from the old city to the new city, less than 5 days later I received the call informing me I would be starting my new position on the date I had in mind, however I never told my agency this information."

"As a leader, know a made-up mind, wins every time. Know every time we launch out, we always WIN! The key to this is to know when we launch out and when to stay still. We will

not always yield the results we desire. However, we will gain powerful nuggets which are needed to be successful in life as a whole. This is why we always WIN! How is it we win when we didn't get the results we desired? One concept I learned as a leader is this, we may not get the results we want, however we get the results we need. It is in these times when we are able to add to our 'Leadership Tool Belt' to gain an understanding on how all things work for the good of those who are true leaders. As you continue to launch out, know this process never gets old, however it does get perfected. Every time you launch out, you gain more! Yes, you gain more! As leaders, we must know how to properly manage the gains. As women leaders especially, there are a lot of times when women simply choose to compete against one another instead of completing one another. As we make gains, in order to break the glass ceilings built for women, it's important to share, empower and grow as women leaders. Let continue to launch out and take the plunge, not for self however for women leaders everywhere."

"Can we say stepping out in faith working for the good, for real? The life of a true leader must know where, when, why and how to execute not for the good of themselves, for the good of the team they serve with as being a leader. When you start to focus on your passions as a leader, the world is endless. Launch out and find purpose! Be addicted to launching out and allow the process to be your guide."

What does it mean to "make it" in your eyes? Ready, Set, JOT!

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_

As you are striving to meet your goals, remember this exercise above. This will allow for you to be accountable to your goals as you are looking to arrive. Another note is, there are many destinations you have been created to obtain with this thing we call, “LIFE.”

***As You Strive to Grow Nuggets:***

- Take time to review the “Ready, Set, JOT” section as a reminder of your journey.
- Find you an accountability partner to assist you with your goals.
- Journal your moments of launching in order to see how far you have come.
- Remember to celebrate your moments as you meet your goals.

***Let’s Bring It Back In***

“The goal after reading these sections is to understand situations make us, not break us as leaders. Some think leaders are born as other thinks leaders are made. I tend to believe from the time we are born, there are experiences which are moved to mould and make us into the leaders we have been created to be. Whatever the case may be, whatever you choose to believe, leaders always need to be cultivated. There is always the grooming along the way for growing and opportunities to add to the life of a leader.”

“One thing to know about being a leader, it’s more than a title. There are many who feel the ‘President’ title or the ‘CEO’ role is what makes someone a leader. This is not so, at all. In order to be a leader, one must know who they are as an individual. Identity is everything when walking down the path way as a leader. One must know it is a road with many ups and downs. There are many times when you may wake up and not feel like being a leader. Or, there may be times when you will want to react like others do, especially when someone is acting out of character, and then it is as again the remembrance of the leader you are which will make you come back to your senses. There are times when being a leader is simply

inconvenient. As a leader, you will learn there is a posture, eloquence, and consistency which is required to be a successful leader. There are times when this posture will attract people you never thought would need to be under your leadership. There is a way a leader carries themselves, not sometimes however all of the time.”

“Remember to use and review the ‘Ready, Set, Jot’ exercises as checks and balances as you are continuing on your journey to become the leader you were created to be. When looking at the lifestyle of a leader, know there are many situations which may attempt to throw us off track. One concept to keep in mind ‘forward’ is the only option. Just think, as leaders, it is our job, duty and honor to pay it forward. Allow your life experiences to move you along the path of life. It is these experiences which allow for you to gain everything you need not only as a leader, however as an individual. As a leader, it is important to be able to relate to those you serve. It is my hope and main goal you have gained a fresh perspective on how your life too can be transformed from lifeless to a leader. Please make sure to use the next three pages called ‘reflection section’ as a time of constant reflection as you are walking out this process of being the leader you have been created to be. Remember, life on purpose, for PURPOSE!”

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Meet Maricela Messner – the Builder of Businesses by Building Families**

“I met my husband Sean after a short time in the military. We married in May of 1994. Sean is, and will always be the love of my life. Many moons before I met him, I had an image of the person I wanted to marry and spend my life with; it was Sean. While it may sound insignificant, I had been so specific in my mind about what I wanted him to look like that I even asked God to send me a guy with green eyes. As a young girl, you may remember the teen bop magazines with many faces of young and handsome boys that graced their covers. The one that had my heart during my high school years was Brian Bloom. Ironically, when I met Sean he matched the vision of my teen heartthrob. God humored me even back then. I truly feel he gave me the desires of my heart in giving me a soul mate with not only good looks but a generous and kind heart. When I met Sean, we immediately connected. He was courteous, respectful and ironically, I knew that my mom would love him. We dated for a few short months and married. We did not stay in the Army for long and moved back to the east coast to begin our life together.”

“After the military, I went to work for corporate America. I started in the call center industry as a call center agent. I loved the work. Professionally I was the perfect corporate gal. I dressed up in suits, attended all the meetings. I hit all my goals and expectations. Eventually, I was promoted because I had mastered the work. The expectations were always set and I achieved goals without hesitation. I worked really hard during the day at work and went to college at night. I made the call center industry my entire professional career. I spent 15 years moving up the ranks and making significant amounts of money. In my time as a business professional I achieved two associates degree, a bachelor’s and a master degree. The

course work was something I enjoyed. I focused my energy on strategic and organizational leadership topics.”

“In spite of my success in the call center world, I wanted more out of life. We had tried for many years to have children and simply could not. We experienced a miscarriage and even started fertility treatments in 2004. We had been married for 10 year and felt sure that with some simple medications we could start a family. That same year, my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer. I had been seeing a fertility specialist and was on track to start taking fertility shots. Sadly, all that was halted because of the attention my mom required in fighting cancer. In 2005, she lost her battle to cancer. It took me until to 2012 to finally have the courage to start seeing another fertility specialist in Washington D.C. Mind you, during that long period of time, we never took preventive action to avoid a pregnancy. Early in 2012 is when I finally realized that I was about to turn 40 and had to make the decision to exhaust all means of having a child or accept life without children. In my soul, I had a deep desire to be a mom. I saw women with children and my heart would ache for a child of my own. On many occasions, I would cry out to God and ask him to take the desire of being a mom away from me if I was not meant to bear children. My spouse is and has always been supportive. He never pressured me or made me feel bad because we did not have successful pregnancies.”

“The idea of not having children was very sad for me. I know many people that are perfectly happy not to have children; but I could not imagine our life without them. We took a huge step of faith and began to see a fertility specialist out of D.C. It is critical that you have a strict and high level of expectations when dealing with something this important. We found the kindest and most compassionate doctor to help us through our journey. He was much older and wiser and had done this type of work his whole life. When we met with him we

discussed our ambitions and shared our desire to have children. With his knowledge and expertise, he scheduled test for both of us and we awaited the results to chart a plan of action. That's the strategic person in me coming through. After the results, it was determined that we would begin fertility medications and plan for in vitro fertilization. This news sounded promising. I began thorough and strict regimen of shots and medical examinations. Once my body was ready, I was prepared for egg retrieval. Ten embryos were paired with sperm and left at the lab for fertilization. Daily, the doctor would call and provide an update on the count and we happily awaited the day of going back to do the implant.”

“I'll never forget that Saturday morning as we both prepared to go back to the clinic. I remember wearing my favorite white and black printed tee-shirt, yoga pants and my most comfortable sneakers. It was going to be a good day; the day we had been waiting for - for years. We loaded up the car and prepared to leave. Right as we opened the garage door I realized I had a missed call from the doctor's office. There was a voicemail from the doctor indicating that none of the ten embryos were viable enough to be used. He sincerely apologized and asked for us not to make the almost two-hour trip into D.C. Since he would not be able to do anything about the results. That was a very sad and disturbing moment for both of us. We went back inside the house and grieved just as you would for the loss of a loved one. We had made significant emotional and financial sacrifices in anticipation of more positive news.”

“The infertility road is a lonely one. You may have people around you that care, but for me it was hard to burden those around me with the pain I felt. I know my husband felt similar pain but we both processed it differently. It seemed that everyone around me was getting pregnant and having a growing a family of their own. We could not relate to our friends because none of them shared this pain.”

“A year later, we got the courage and fortitude to try again. Our doctor provided a variety of methods and we selected a non-conventional one. The risk was high but I can now tell you that the results were positive and in 2013 we welcomed Seth into our family. We have always known that we wanted more children and that is where Sarah came into our lives. We also went through an intensive process of becoming foster parents and soon adoptive parents. The joy I have for being a mom is unlike anything I have ever experienced.”

“In March 2016, I went to Orlando, FL to become certified as a speaker, trainer, and a coach with the John Maxwell Team. This became a good career path for me because I have always had passion for serving and helping people. John's legacy is such that he has spent 40 years creating leadership development materials that become universal in nature. It stems from leading people with the golden rule and serving in such a way that your life is fulfilled because of the work you do to help others develop and achieve their highest level of performance.”

## CHAPTER SIX

### Meet Remi Duyile – Queen of Perseverance to Greatness

My book ‘Perseverance – Winning Key to Your Destiny’ lines were highlighted from the anthem of Civil Rights Movement:

*We shall overcome*

*We shall overcome*

*We shall overcome some day*

*There is peace in my heart*

*I do believe*

*That we shall overcome some day.*

It is a powerful song about the ultimate triumphs of perseverance over adversity. Music can unite people and help them believe in something even when all hope seems lost. The above song gives a vivid description of the concept ‘Perseverance’ using the phrases ‘shall’ and ‘some day’ which points out a futuristic event or happening. Lets face it: life is tough, and guess what? It will only get tougher. So much for the facts. The question remains, will you rise to the occasion and meet the day to day challenges, head on, undaunted and without complaint? In essence will you persevere? This is a question asked by Kirk Charles, America’s top motivational writer and speaker. For most of us, success is one of our biggest career aspirations. However, it comes in various shapes and sizes and is conceived differently by each of us. Whatever success means to you, chances are that hard work, dedication and most importantly ‘Perseverance’ will be necessary. Perseverance most times has failures attached to it because you keep pressing and pushing further despite all odds to achieve your set goal or aspiration.”

“Despite the obviously negative connotations associated with the word ‘failure,’ it is very

often the precursor to success to those that are not afraid to try again and again. When things go wrong, begin to fall apart, failure is imminent and quitting looks easy, perseverance is one trait that allows us dust ourselves and jump back on that proverbial horse we hear so much about.”

“Do you know what it takes to move from Teller to a Vice President with four strikes? My ability to tackle all obstacles and to be more focused . If I can persevere, endure the hardships, there is nothing you can’t achieve.”

“Let me share with you my four strikes in Corporate America:Black,Female, Accent and Nigerian, I embraced these labeled strikes as my unique value proposition to the world. Perseverance enabled me to handle the negative and malicious actions against the stereo type co-workers and customers had towards . My focus was on becoming a Vice president with my MBA already in my hand even at the teller position. Teller position to me was a stepping stool to enter into the lowest level so I can grasp retail banking in its entirety for full comprehension and enhancement of my competence level.”

“Some hostilities I faced were emotional and verbal such as walking in to the office in the morning with a nice good morning and response such as what is so good about the morning? Setting the camera to zero majorly on me, whereby the culprits got away easier and no wrong was found with me as my own focus was beyond the teller position. Statements such as ‘you dress too much for the building were often said, what they didn’t know is ‘I was dressing for my future greatness. My promotion was so rapid that I became unstoppable as perseverance encourages you to be focused, become more competent and confident, it helps you invest in your personal development to attain your set goals. As women,we are so wired to embrace perseverance because of our big picture thinking and our nurturing nature. You have what it takes my sisters to rock your world to significance if you can only ‘Embrace and remember

Perseverance is not a Personality Trait, it's a choice to persist, dig deep and take action.' Going back to history lane, great men like Henry Ford, Albert Einstein, Walt Disney, Thomas Edison, etc. Whose footprints have been left in the sand of time had this virtue called 'perseverance' which is why the world still benefits from their feats today. . If I can persevere, endure the hardships, there is nothing you can't achieve.

“Perseverance is not giving up, it is persistence and tenacity; the effort requires to do something and to keep doing it till end even if its hard. Sometimes it feels so easy to give up but giving up on life will not enable you to achieve your goals. Every Olympic athletes to billionaire business tycoons, to everyday successful people should know that without the ability to truly persevere, they simply would not have made it to where they are today. So whether you are aiming for the stars or want to reach a 'smaller' goal that is important to you, perseverance is a major prerequisite. To persevere means having the ability and the composure to hold back and wait for something to happen without feeling anxious, becoming irritated or panicked. In reality, this is a difficult characteristic for us to adopt especially when stress has a hold. It requires enormous self-control. Although we are aware of how virtuous it is, it takes a certain level of maturity, personal growth and well-balanced lifestyle to be able to truly achieve this. True, there are those who are genetically calmer with a more restrained personality but when life takes over that those folks can become impatient. When one is impatient, they have a strong compulsion for immediate results for whatever it is they are pursuing. When you take a child to the store, they seek instant gratification almost every step of the way. How many times have you heard 'I want' this or that and if they don't get it at that moment the entire store hears about it. As adults, the drive for pursuing anything worthwhile means letting go of the "gotta have it now" mentality like we were when we were a child. Success is a marathon not a sprint, it means diligently doing your part, pacing yourself, and allowing the puzzle to fall into place.”

“To persevere means learning how to cope with your anger and hostility. If you have a short fuse, it will blow up in your face very often. Getting to know yourself and what lights your fuse easily and having a plan for diffusing the situation when they arise helps to keep you unruffled. By diffusing your anger you can learn to be more understanding of the rhythm of the world around you and tune into it. When you are tuned in, you can play the game of life better with calmness of temperance and peace. This state of mind enables more clarity of thought, and the ability to make more rational decisions. To persevere doesn't mean you have to take a step back and slack off on your efforts. It means doing the tough work but understanding that you are not alone in your pursuit of your goals. There is a world out there that consists of people who you depend on, and who depend on you for progress. That means things are not always going at the pace of who envision. Even though you become irritated or angry and your blood pressure is through the roof, things are not going to change suddenly for you. Therefore, you must be willing to accept setbacks, human error and disappointments along the way.”

“In our multitasking, instant gratifying and short-attention seeking world, the virtue of perseverance seems to be relegated to the background as everyone is on the fast lane to get the quick-quick result. Yet there is a fundamental virtue that holds ground and has controlled the universe irrespective of societal prejudice and inconsistency in keeping up to it, it is the virtue of perseverance. Perseverance is so powerful that it cuts across societal class and strata and remains a principle that must be adhered to if success must be achieved. Perseverance cuts across race, color, continents, nations, tribe and tongues and gives various degree of achievement depending on one's inner strength and ability to press harder. A valuable graduate who seeks for job in various establishments and organizations and yet it seems like nothing is working on just needs a little perseverance to get the job of his choice.”

“Those who persevere never accept just anything because they have a target and so they keep pressing and pushing hard and then all of a sudden the target is hit and the reward becomes mouth watering. Take the case of a farmer for instance, who plants a mango seed. The seed buried in the soil does not show any sign of germinating yet the farmer keeps on visiting the farm daily to water the seed believing that one day the seed will eventually sprout as a tree. Four to five years later, the mango seed becomes a mighty tree with fruits that everyone wants to eat from. Just as the case of the mango seed, this same thing applies to us in our various pursuits and endeavours. Our inputs, dedication and commitment may seem unyielding and fruitless but consistent hardwork and courage eventually delivers into our hands what seem far and unreachable and at the end we are not only the beneficiaries but those around us who also participated actively or passively to the realization of our dreams.”

“The ability to keep on even when our efforts are met with disappointment or failure is an ability that can make all the difference in the world. Perseverance comes from being committed to your goal and believing in yourself and your goal’s possibility. More than anything, perseverance is what gets our projects out the door and at the same time distinguishes us from failures. In winning in destiny there may be setbacks, yet our determination to never give up boost our inner strength and drive to come out refined and fit. The art of perseverance helps you tame and reconstruct your mind towards a more positive outlook in life as it borrows strength from resilience and optimism and brushes elbows with courage along the way. When climbing the ladder of your profession or career, there are times when it looks like quitting is the best option but a review of your goals and constant envisioning of your target makes winning easy and revitalizes your zeal to forge ahead. In the course of persevering, your mind should be hinged on the fact that nothing good comes easy but it takes time and patience. People who have lack of perseverance either end up on a poor job that pays less than minimum wage or with a tremendously bad life situation. This also

applies to someone who is highly intelligent and a scholarly genius but is lethargic by nature and reluctant to diligence, can hardly prosper in life because he does not know how to use his brain and labour in the right direction. In the world at large, all the great things have been made or constructed only by perseverance. What distinguishes star performers in their their respective fields may not necessarily be talent but exceptional commitment to ambitions and goals, perhaps more than anything perseverance lets us master our talents and that turns dreams into living, breathing realities.”

“Perseverance is a strength onto itself and some people naturally possess more of it than others do but everybody can build her perseverance muscles. As with all of our character strengths, attention to it and practice will take us a long way. If you ever get into a situation where you want to give up, you will do much better for yourself by saying ‘I can do this,’ ‘I can make this happen,’ and, ‘I can win.’ Just the words ‘I can’ produce more energy for your mind, and this will empower you. Life is hard, but only the tough-minded will get somewhere. Everything you want in life is within your reach. But you have to empower yourself to reach out and grab it. There is no comfort in being comfortable. Comfort comes from the strength earned from growing through discomfort. Comfort comes by gaining strength from adversity. Comfort is self-confidence. Comfort comes from knowing that you have the WILL to do whatever it takes.”

*‘I’ve missed over 9,000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game-winning shot...and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.’— Michael Jordan*

### **Here Are Some Various Ways to Build Perseverance:**

**Know what you want.** If you have a specific goal in mind, plot out a course to help you reach it. Do a research to find out what steps to you need to take along the way. If it’s helpful,

create a schedule that will help you to meet your goal and give yourself a deadline for each step along the way. Whatever your goal, prepare to put in some time and work since perseverance takes a lot of mental work.

**Develop your dream.** Before you begin to work on your project, take your time to imagine how you will feel, both as you work on it and when it is completed. Imagine being engaged in it and feeling the harmony, fulfillment and mastery or pride that will come with it. You can also find yourself visualizing the stages of the work and how it will look when it is done. Set aside some quiet time and imagine those feelings as deeply and vividly as you can. Another is to prepare for the work and plan how you'll meet the inevitable setbacks and obstacles. As you do these, revisit the positive energy of the feelings you tapped as you dreamed about accomplishing your goal. To achieve your dreams, certain strategies need to be adopted such as the SMART principle (S-specific M-easurable A-attainable R-ealistic T-ime). If a person is brought up impatiently, it means bad luck. Why? The reason is you have to first break this habit of being impatient, which takes time but could be done. Remember! You have to be patient to become patient! When a person endures time in difficult situation, it does not mean he or she should just sit there and wait for magic to happen to change it. Perseverance is doing something about the situation and wait for the result of what you did to fix it. Let's not mix perseverance with neglecting time.

**Cultivate your optimism.** Optimists see negative events as temporary and narrowly focused. An optimist who gives a stumbling presentation, for example, sees that she had a really hard time with it but that she also learnt a lot and will do better next time. Pessimists on the other hand, see negative events as set in stone and affecting everything. The key, then, is to listen to your self-talk and to work at intentionally moving toward an optimistic view of events, both the good and the bad ones. According to a positive psychology master, Douglas B.

Turner, “the pessimist begins to challenge the sweeping statements that make the bad things in their lives. Over time and with practice the pessimist learns to describe good things as permanent and pervasive. As this skill grows and becomes more and more natural, the loud pessimistic voice softens and the ability to persevere in the face of difficulties expands.”

**Get rid of self doubt.** The first hurdle you are likely to encounter is correcting the state of your own self confidence. Its really difficult to make progress unless you are capable of persevering. No matter how unobtainable your goals may seem now, you have the intelligence and power to get there. Don’t compare yourself to other people because doing so will inevitably lead to self doubt. You have the power to persevere using your unique strengths and talents. Also if there are things in your life that hurt your confidence get rid of them and also spend time doing things that you are good at, things that make you feel satisfied and positive about life like playing a sport, making art, cooking, reading, knitting, gardening etc.

You cannot tell from appearances how things will go. Sometimes imagination makes things out far worse than they are; yet without imagination not much can be done. Those people who are imaginative see many more dangers than perhaps exist; certainly many more than will happen; but then they must also pray to be given that extra courage to carry this far-reaching imagination

**Practice staying cool.** Getting hung up on stressful but small incident takes a lot of energy, energy that could be channeled towards something more productive. Part of persevering is mastering the ability to let go of the little things. Thinking through before speaking or acting could help avoid chaos or pressure. While you are thinking, feel the anger or irritation move through your body and feel it subside. Move on with your day, dealing with every situation in a cool and appropriate manner. If you are on a line, wait patiently for your turn. If someone

makes an annoying statement, respond with a smile and let it go because there are more important things to channel your energy to.

**Know your values.** Having a good grasp of your own personal value is how you figure out the best way forward in any given situation and it helps to keep your mind aimed toward your target. What are your core beliefs? What do you stand for, and how does that play out in your life? Read up a lot of different perspectives even if you feel very strongly opposed to a certain issue. Explore your mind and learn how to listen to your conscience.

**Stand up for yourself.** After making the right decision, back it up with all you've got and follow it through in the face of criticism, hardship and self doubt. It takes courage to act on your beliefs especially when they aren't popular. But you can draw strength and confidence from the knowledge that you weighed the options carefully and acted based on your own steadfast beliefs. As you pursue your goals, you will be faced with haters and distracters who are jealous, mean-spirited and better still have nothing to do with their time. Whatever the case may, the best thing is to avoid them as much as possible since any energy spent on them is wasted. Often times, when people tell you that you cannot do something, it should strengthen your resolve to go all out for it.

**Learn from your mistakes and other famous failures.** Wisdom is gained by making mistakes and trying something different next time. Reflect on what happened and figure out what you can take from the experience, then apply what you learnt next time you have another obstacle to face down. Even the strongest people have failures so don't form the habit of beating yourself up when something goes wrong. Instead plot a new strategy for achieving your goals knowing it would turn into something better. One of the best ways to bolster this sense of optimism is to internalize the stories of people who have made the leap from failure to overwhelming success. For example, in 1978, a man who had two university degrees but

very few postgraduate accomplishments decided to run for Congress. After a grueling campaign, he gathered friends, family and supporters to watch the results of the election, only to quickly realize that he had lost by 6 percentage points. It would have been easy for him to say, ‘oh well, I guess I’m not one of those people who can win an election ‘ and simply go on with his life. Similarly, in 2000, another man watched as election results confirmed that he had failed to win a congressional election. He lost to the incumbent by a margin of more than 2 to 1. He, too could have also said ‘well I’m not one of those people who can win an election’. Instead on January 20th, 2008, the first man shook hands with the second man as he passed the Presidency of the United States over to him. Their names, of course, are George Bush and Barack Obama and it turned out that they could win an election after all.

**Be part of a community.** Support yourself with people who know you and will support you as you work to achieve your goals. Support other people too, since you are an integral part of a community. Be someone others can turn to and don’t be shy to turn to them if you need help. Be a dependable son, daughter, sibling, parent and friend by maintaining close family ties with your family and friends so that they may be there at your darkest times.

**Nourish your spirituality.** Many people find that honouring, a sense of being part of something bigger is comforting and energizing. Having a spiritual life can help you persevere when you don’t know where to turn to. If you are religious, attend services regularly and if you pray do it often. Practice meditation and other forms of spiritual awareness. Spend time in natural places and allow yourself experience the wonder of forests, rivers, oceans and open sky. Patience does magic with everything. Whether in losing weight, quitting smoking, raising children or in any unexpected difficult circumstance. Just keep in mind, that patience will work wonders if you give it the time it needs. Time is a big factor in persevering, so amuse yourself while waiting, walk in the park, visit a friend, read a book or even pray to

know that you are not alone, God is there for. Just get your mind occupied with things that you like to do and makes you happy.

**Stay true to who you are.** You'll persevere if you continue aligning your actions with your values. When something about your life begins to feel wrong, make a change and continue correcting your course until you reach your goal. This also entails increasing your knowledge, skills and abilities. Before starting to execute your plans make sure you have what it takes to succeed. Nothing fails like a soldier going to war without the necessary combat skills to fight and mastery to defeat the enemy. To win, you need to keep on honing your skills, upgrading your knowledge and improving your abilities.

**Focus on short-term victories.** One of the **things that can** paralyse and impede your focus toward achieving your goal in life is to focus only on the big picture. Doing that may make it seem like you are not going anywhere because your goal is inherently a long term goal. Imagine you hired a construction team to build you a new house, and then you judged their success based on how the house looked after the first week, you would be quite disappointed because the house will not paint a picture of what you contracted them for, rather it would be basically the foundation that would be seen. But of course the foundation would make the rest of the house possible. In the same manner, it would be silly to judge your short term progress based on the long term measurements. Your short term victories are needed to keep you motivated and to gradually move you forward. Let's say that you want to lose weight. For some, this can be a challenging goal, that they may have failed at many times before. In previous attempts, they may have become demoralized and given up on their goal because of a setback, such as gaining a couple of pounds instead of losing them.

Perhaps the goal is so far away that they just cannot believe, even within themselves, that it will ever happen. This is where it is important to find a way to persevere, to find it within to

keep going despite the challenges.

Once a person can flip the switch in their own thinking and turn on the thoughts and emotions that come along with the determination to persevere, the goal can become attainable. This is what personal trainers try to instill in their weight loss clients. When the client yells out in pain that they can't lift that weight even one more time, and the trainer yells back that yes, they can, the trainer is trying to break that barrier. The trainer, even if they seem mean, is trying to flip the switch for the client that means the difference between success and failure. This example shows the very definition of persevering; choosing to fight on despite challenges. Of course, it's not easy to flip the switch, but it is possible by looking within and finding a kernel of determination to build on and by actively controlling the negative thoughts that keep many people from persevering towards their goals. So how do you flip the switch? Experts say that the ability to persevere is a habit. The habit is formed when dopamine is released into the blood. Dopamine is the chemical that makes people feel good when they have a success. It's the little rush that comes as a reward for something good. Those who can almost self-regulate this dopamine rush, by controlling their attitudes, thoughts and their behaviors seem to be able to form the very healthy habit of persevering.

Self-Determination is making all the important decisions about your life, health, and well-being. People believe when they go to a doctor, for instance, that the doctor has been trained to take their well-being as a person into account when they treat them. This may apply to some doctors, but others might want to others want to find a quick remedy for your symptoms, send you to a chemist, and reduce the size of your bank account. They haven't got the time or the interest to find out exactly what causes your health problems and how you can eliminate these causes yourself without recourse to drugs and medication. Your health is your own problem. The doctor isn't going to suffer the consequences of his decisions. It isn't his

body. It is the same with all the other people we pay money to, to fix something, or take care of some area, of our lives. They don't have to worry about your problem after they walk out the door. This is why self-determination is important for personal growth. You can't hand it to a so-called expert because he will make decisions based on his judgment, not on yours. His goals are not your goals. It is your life and your Personal Growth. Perseverance requires a certain mindset and perspective on things to make it through the tough spots. Thinking 'right' at times means thinking what no one else is thinking, the kind of thoughts that seem odd to some other people and are obviously contrarian. Sometimes, perseverance means taking a stance that you might occupy on your own for a while. People that persevere experience obstacle and are also contrarian in the sense that they even love and seek them because overcoming them helps them grow.. Its an attitude towards challenges that equates to an opportunity that makes you better once you've dealt with it. One of the inspiring quotes for me in this context is by Arnold Scharzenegger "I hear this all the time. Infact I love it when someone says nobody has ever done this before, because when I do it that means I am the first one that has done it". You also have to take responsibility for yourself. If you need help ask for it. Chances are someone has the same question as you but just too scared to ask. Being optimistic and having self confidence help you reach your goals and purposes. Even though some people express it more than others, perseverance not only ensures survival but it also ensures success. When we have that burning desire to achieve something, it is a great feeling of accomplishment when the goal we strive for is fulfilled. Unfortunately, throughout our journey, on the road to success, there will be a great amount of trials and tribulations standing on our way. Only through perseverance can we conquer those obstacles that make our journey harder. Having a positive outlook on negative situations are the key to winning. Knowing that things take time and nothing comes over night is a good way to think positively. For example, if you had a bad day at work, no one was doing their job correctly

and colleagues are blaming you, then it is a good time to show positivity. Without positivity, our world leaders wouldn't explore new lands and human civilization would be impossible. A great number of modern successful international corporations were close to bankrupting, but perseverance enabled them to stay and improve their businesses. Perseverance means to rise above your circumstances. Life may suck right now, but don't let it suck you down into a pit of despair. Perseverance is more than endurance because endurance means to just get through it, to survive the tragedy, to survive the grief, the struggle and sometimes just getting through it is all we can do, but we should always strive to persevere. We should strive to do more than just get through it.

We should remember that perseverance produces character, and character results in hope, and hope can carry us through the darkest of days. Perseverance is a sign of inner strength and of a strong character. Without it, you cannot make any progress. It is the ability that makes a person win against all odds. To achieve the greatest success, you have to embrace the prospect of failure because the sweetest victory is the one that's most difficult. The one that requires you to reach down deep inside, to fight with everything you've got, to be willing leave everything out there on the battlefield without knowing, until that do or die moment, if your heroic effort will be enough. In fact, your persistence has helped you learn to walk, to talk, to write. And you have succeeded in this. You may be active, but it doesn't mean that you move forward. If you don't move forward, you will not achieve success. Remember when you learned to ride a bike. Most of us made many attempts to obtain the skills of riding a bicycle, but we showed perseverance, which led us to success, and we learned to ride a bike.

The key means to develop perseverance is doing small steps, resulting in small achievement. Small achievements form a big success. Think about creating a puzzle: you add part by part

and finally get the final image. Persistence usually means learning something new in order to achieve the main goal. Always invest in your knowledge, as it will assist you in moving forward and exploring new areas to succeed. The way to success can't be without failures. The most important thing is to learn from these failures and to continue moving forward. Do not give up. Take the necessary lesson, and move on toward success. The key to success in any field is to continue making efforts to achieve your goal even if you haven't managed to do it from the first time, persist, dig deep and take action when it feels like the world is working against you. Perseverance as a winning key to destiny is associated with some vital elements like courage, humility, gratitude, integrity and self-control which we shall be treating individually:

**COURAGE** means to be steadfast, unmovable, self advising, bravery etc. It is the choice and willingness to confront agony pain, uncertainty, and intimidation without fear. Courage also refers to the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficult situation. It is also a universally admired attribute that makes one outstanding at the end of every situation. Using the movie industry for instance, every audience always grow an admiration for the protagonist in the play due to his courage to withstand the villain/antagonist or better still to undertake a difficult task for the happiness of everyone. It is a unique attribute that accords one respect, yet, it is not just a physical of bravery but entails mental stamina and bravery. Men like Steve Jobs, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela etc had to be courageous before they could achieve their various feats which cut across the business world and politics respectively. Training myself to move from poor communication to connection have a lot of courageous steps attached to it. From the Bible to fairy tales; ancient myths to Hollywood movies, our culture is rich with exemplary tales of bravery and self- sacrificing for the greater right. In the fulfillment of one destiny, courage is a vital attribute because it is needed to overcome challenges and discouragement. The road will not be easy because nothing good

comes easy but our ability to be brave and endure the pain, cold, hunger, lack and insufficiency trims and prunes us to be the best material needed at the top. We may face rejection and mockery and it may seem like nothing is working but our ability to hold on and never give up draws the victory closer than we think. As the popular saying goes "Behind every cloud, there is a silver lining." Courage entails the following:

- Feeling fear yet choosing to act
- Following your heart
- Persevering in the face of adversity
- Standing up for what is right
- Facing suffering with dignity and faith

**HUMILITY** means to be calm and gentle in a very tough or difficult situation. It refers to meekness, lowliness and absence of self. It's not about being dormant, rather, it is about having a modest worthwhile submitting yourself to others. It connotes your ability to be accessed and reached by everyone irrespective of their social class and order. Humility is a state of not thinking you are better than others. Even the Holy Book points out that the kingdom of Heaven can only be accessed when we become like little children which connotes humility. In the pursuance of destiny, it takes a humble person to be able to bear all odds and reach their desired goal regardless of individual prejudice and societal discrimination. Many at times we are quick to give up easily due to pride and self-recognition instead of staying focused on our dreams. Relocation to serve under unpleasant condition in a developing nation for 5 years. Had to persevere to painstakingly learn the new system at my own detriment due to the bigger picture which I never forgot to put on the garment of humility.

According to the Catholic Advent encyclopaedia, there are four cardinal virtues associated with humility and they are Prudence, Justice, fortitude and temperance and all other moral

virtues are annexed to these either as integral, potential or subjective parts. It takes humility for an apprentice to submit himself/herself to his master for the duration of the skill acquisition, for a student to be studious at school avoiding distractions and campus vices, for a wife to have a peaceful home and to consistently receive the love of her husband. Humility is one of the winning keys to destiny. When acquired sets one at the pinnacle of his career even when it is undeserving and unqualified for. It gives one the privilege and opportunity to access secrets and truth that is not easily accessed.

The Holy Book still confirms this in the book of James ‘‘God resist the proud but giveth grace to the humble.’’ Culturally speaking, a popular adage states ‘‘Pride goes before a fall’’. The issue of pride is non-negotiable in the fulfillment of one’s destiny. Some basic truths about humility include:

- Humility begins with a sense of one’s subordination to God.
- It does not feel a right to better treatment in the midst of superiors
- Humility does not allow ego override the truth rather, it is ready to let go of debate and arguments.
- It knows it is fallible and so considers criticism and learn from it.
- A destiny hinged on humility carries alongside its accomplishment honour and a high sense of responsibility.

**GRATITUDE** means to be thankful, appreciative not just for things received but also for things lost. Nominations to high- level community engagements makes me feel great for what to come. The higher you go, the hotter it becomes.

At times we experience lack, dissatisfaction and incompleteness, probably due to visa denied, spouse lost, salary owed, landlord’s bullying, health decline, robbery attack etc and all these

at times make us lose our peace (true state of mind), but as unreasonable as it may sound to the ear, we can still be grateful to our maker and those around us for the little resources and assets we can still lay claim to. Not forgetting that it's only a grateful heart that can think better and have access to mind-blowing ideas and solutions needed for the accomplishment of one's great destiny. A heart filled with ingratitude is most times filled with fear (False Experience Appearing Real), anger, hatred, anxiety, depression, grief, despair, etc. We can re-create the feeling of true gratitude by remembering the good times in our lives and painting a mental picture of our destiny if we can. At times due to setbacks and failures experienced, therapeutically, it is recommended at times that we fully feel the anger and grief without taking actions that might hurt you or others can help to clear the energy and help you return to inner balance. Gratitude also prolongs one's life span so as to achieve one's dream and aspirations. This is made possible due to the absence of cancerous and life-threatening ailments. A life of gratitude makes you take each day at a time with perseverance knowing well that you have a goal and a destiny to fulfill. Gratitude gives you the inner strength to persevere and wither every storm irrespective of the objectives of such storms, rather, you look inward, thankful for the abilities and potentials loaded on your inside. It is the feeling that emerges from within, based on our acknowledgement of the positive things that come our way that we do not actively work or ask for. Gratitude can never be imposed on a person because it is a choice but it should be noted that one's decision to be grateful sets one at a fast pace to the fulfillment of one's destiny as this act can be expressed in words, deeds, by extending time, resources, or gifts to support people in unexpected ways or to help those in need.

Gratitude is a persevering component of winning in destiny. Virtues are qualities that support the inherent goodness that resides within each human being. Gratitude is both a social and a theological virtue. The Holy Bible and the Qur'an all cited gratitude as central among all virtues. Centuries ago, the philosopher, Cicero argued that gratitude is the parent of all virtues,

the virtue that begets other virtues.

The cultivation of gratitude develops character, the embodiment of desired virtues that is needed in the fulfillment of one's destiny. The advice to cultivate character by expanding one's capacity for gratitude is a time-honoured wisdom. The art of maintaining a grateful disposition engenders other virtues such as generosity, humility, compassion, wisdom, joy, integrity, and trust. This disposition of mindfulness, of being aware of and thankful for our blessings helps cultivate our virtues and significantly diminishes and eradicates any obstacle to winning in our destiny.

**INTEGRITY** is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. It is generally a personal choice to hold oneself to consistent moral and ethical standards. In ethics, integrity is regarded by many people as the truthfulness or accuracy of one's action. It takes an individual of integrity to win in destiny because on your pathway to greatness there will be lots of temptations that will need you to let down your guard or bow to the current situation that may look appetizing yet is like an outwardly beautiful apple which is inwardly full of maggots.

Our decision to persevere may sometimes be inconvenient and burning but one thing is certain the end usually justifies the means. In history and our contemporary time, individuals who decide to maintain integrity either at their workplace, school, home, church or the society at large usually breakthrough at the end as they become refined and better. Integrity can stand in the face of hypocrisy i.e. judging with the standards of integrity involves regarding consistency as a virtue and suggests that parties holding within themselves apparently conflicting values should account for the discrepancy or alter their beliefs. The word 'integrity' evolved from the Latin word 'integer' meaning whole or complete. In this context, integrity is the inner sense of wholeness deriving from qualities such as honesty and

consistency of character. Most of the conflicts and wars in the world today is due to the absence of integrity which leads to a breach of agreement either among nations, individuals, corporate bodies, religious organizations, academic institutions etc.

Integrity makes one outstanding and different from the crowd as it sets you as a role model to others. An individual who perseveres knows fully well what lies before him will not trade his future for the current enticement that looks rewarding unlike a man who lacks integrity will fall for anything at anytime and anyhow. Here are some signs that a person lacks integrity:

- The person reports more honest misbehaviour.
- The person finds reasons just to justify such behavior.
- The person thinks that others are more likely to commit crimes than himself.
- The person exhibit impulsive behaviors.

In the academic setting, a student who has integrity will not consider sleeping with a lecturer or giving of bribes for marks as an option as such knows that there is always a consequence for such actions rather such a student will be more studious and persevering irrespective of the pain, denial, hunger and discomfort that may be experienced. Biblically, the account of Joseph the slave in the house of Potiphar is a good example of integrity. Despite the disturbances by Mrs. Potiphar, young Joseph refused to let down his guard so easily rather risked losing his position in the house because he knew that Mr. Potiphar's house was not his destination but a stepping stone to his palace. Many times, we are faced with situations that leave us in a dilemma like Joseph but one thing is sure constant pressing, pushing and endurance will take us to our desired goals and dreams. An individual of integrity is usually valued and trusted irrespective of his social status as this virtue can turn a servant to a master, a subordinate to a superior, etc. Integrity is not just why a person acted in a particular way but

who the person actually is. Question about a person's integrity cast doubt not only on their intentions but on the source of those intentions, the person's personal character. So, integrity is about having the right ethical virtues that become visible in a pattern of behavior.

**SELF-CONTROL** is the ability to suppress one's emotions and behavior in the face of temptations and impulses. As an executive function, self control is a cognitive process that is necessary for regulating one's behavior in order to achieve goals. It is like a muscle which on the long run can either strengthen or improve over time. As individuals, there is an innate desire to live a life of convenience and still look forward to a fair result but down memory lane we know its not possible. As the popular adage goes'' you cannot eat your cake and have it'' Self control can be likened to discipline as it deals with the denial of self to achieve one's dreams. For instance, a person who is obsessed and wants to lose weight has to be mindful of what he eats, such as avoiding fatty food, avoiding excess consumption of sugary drinks, Cultivate the habit of daily exercise and taking the right medications. This also applies in other spheres of life as a person who has a bright and promising future cannot indulge in vices because others are doing it rather such a person needs to have control over his life so as to be healthy and fit for the task at hand. Our society today, seems to be deficient of people who have control over their appetites, movements, words, emotions, associations, time, mind etc but daring to exercise self-control sets you at an edge and makes you a force to reckon with despite the disorder and chaos. In order to win in destiny, self-control is a vital force as it gives you the privilege to weigh between two or more options and making a choice that may give a safe landing. Self-control demands that an individual work to overcome thoughts, emotions and automatic responses / impulses. This core value separates us from our ancient ancestors and the rest of the animal kingdom as it relates to the ability to subdue our impulses in order to achieve long term goals. Rather than responding to immediate impulses, we can plan, evaluate alternative actions, and, often enough avoid doing things we'll regret later. The

ability to exert self-control is also called willpower. Since it is an innate ability i.e an internal drive that is not easily suppressed by external forces. Self-control is what allows us to direct our attention and it underlies all kinds of achievement. Self-control is a skill that we all possess but the only difference is that we underrate our ability to let go of the unimportant for the fear of people's sarcastic remarks or rejection forgetting that our decision to stand our ground irrespective of what may oppose us will be the key to unlocking endless possibilities. When it comes to self-control, it is so easy to focus on our failures that our success tend to pale in comparison. And why shouldn't they? When self-control is an effort that is intended to help achieve a goal but failing to control yourself is just that failure. Various forms of self control include:

- Impulse control**- the ability to stop and think before acting
- Emotional control**- the ability to manage feelings by thinking about goals.
- Movement control**- the ability to control body movements

## **THE END**

Do not hesitate to exercise your WILL in order to take the actions necessary to shaping your life the way you want. Remember, this is your life, not your parents, teachers, church authorities, neighbors, friends' or boss's. Take control now so that when you are older, you won't let everyone walk all over you and make you subservient. You are equal to any other person, and nobody is better than you. We all have the same blood, we are of the same species, and that means nobody is greater than you. Not me, not the President of the United States. It's all a frame of mind. I have been in the same room with people who are worth five-hundred million dollars, even billions. They are no different and no better than you or I. The only difference between them and the average person is that they took decisive action and

“went for it.” To make their dreams reality, they persevered through all the hard times until they got to where they are today.

That’s it! Their great success came from simply following things through to the end. Don’t let stress or pressures consume your mind and overwhelm you. Think doubt and fail, think success and have victory in your life. By adding pressures upon pressures, and realizing how these pressures add up to create a massive burden, you can finally come to recognize the ways in which your mind continually acts like a broken record. Because you may be constantly trying to dig your way out of a ditch, you come to feel overwhelmed, like you’re never accomplishing anything. You find yourself “ping-ponging” through life, lost in the maze of your mind. You go through the routines of life like a zombie, and are zombies happy? Not very.

So much of our energy is spent dealing with the daily pressures that we may never take the time to do what we want to do, and that is accomplishing our dreams. Use your WILL. We all have it somewhere buried in our hearts. To me WILL is the “Holy Grail” of building the life you’ve always wanted. It separates the achievers and those so-called “dreamers” who are unwilling to take action. If you lack the WILL, you get the leftovers of what life has to offer.

Go out into this world of limitless possibilities and make WILL your best friend! The impatient mindset has a tendency to question our efforts. No matter how hard we may be trying, the impatient mindset has the ability to set us up for doubt and discouragement.

## CONCLUSION

This indeed was a little bit of our journey as it pertains to leadership. There are so much more that we can possibly discuss with you, we are quite sure. We have so many experiences that we have had throughout our journey from birth to where we are today as the owner and leader of our different companies; which for us, allows us to share my message globally as well as to help build willing leaders through consulting and through mentorship and search, as well as the nonprofit organization Women of Elevation Career Services International that allows us help those women in need and also to build them up as leaders as well.

This is where we are in our journey. It is important for you to understand where you are in your journey as well as it pertains to leadership. You are called to lead. This is indeed your time to lead. We are going to strongly encourage you to connect. Connect in a powerful way with leaders, connect with many of the other ladies that you are going to be reading about. You are going to read about their journey in just a few moments as well.

These ladies who strongly believe in you, being able to lead your ship, leading your ship well so that you will be able to be a leader in your community, a leader in your organization, a leader in your home because if you can lead yourself well you will be able to lead others well.

We predict within the next few years that we are going to have so many great women making great strides in every industry throughout the world. We predict that we are soon going to have a female president. We predict and speak into the universe today that we are going to have more, many more female CEOs that are going to rise up and become a greater person in the society. We predict that we're going to have great modeled leaders that these kids, these children, female children, need to see. It is our hope and desire that we have stronger mothers

inside of the homes, where they learn from the mistakes of others. They learn from older women better inside society today and receive wisdom from older women.

It is our desire to see statistics of abuse decrease. It is our desire that we give birth to advocates, that we give birth to strong speakers who are going out and being a testimony in the world today to inspire hope in the lives of others. It is our desire to help to push forward, to be the sister that you might have wished that you had when you were young. It is our desire to help you to move forward to encourage you to have that plan so that you can lead well today and forevermore.

When we know ourselves, we can maximize our positive traits, and become aware of our weaker areas, which help us to achieve our leadership potential. Once you understand and know yourself, you must hone your communication skills. These are not limited to your public speaking skills either. This includes your writing style and your body language. Your ability to communicate effectively enhances your ability to improve interpersonal relationships.

Another important skill is to know how to learn. Examine different teaching methods and learning styles to identify how you and those you may lead learn best. This skill will greatly enhance your ability to make decisions and give clear instructions.

An exceptional leader is one that recognizes the value of harnessing the skills and abilities of team members and leads them toward greater efficiency and effectiveness and so a leader is not a title and great leadership is not something you are born into. Great leadership is something you develop.

*"The miracle power that elevates the few is to be found in their industry, application, and perseverance, under the promptings of a brave determined spirit." - Mark Twain*

Many motivational experts like to say that leaders are made, not born. We would argue the exact opposite because we believe we are all natural born leaders but have been deprogrammed along the way. As children, we were natural leaders - curious and humble, always hungry and thirsty for knowledge, with an incredibly vivid imagination; we knew exactly what we wanted, we were persistent and determined in getting what we wanted, and had the ability to motivate, inspire, and influence everyone around us to help us in accomplishing our mission. So why is this so difficult to do as adults? What happened?

As children, over time, we got used to hearing these phrases: No, Don't, and Can't. No! Don't do this. Don't do that. You can't do this. You can't do that. No! Many of our parents told us to keep quiet and not disturb the adults by asking silly questions. This pattern continued into high school with our teachers telling us what we could do and could not do and what was possible. Then many of us got hit with the big one institutionalized formal education known as college or university. Unfortunately, the traditional educational system does not teach students how to become leaders; it teaches students how to become polite order takers for the corporate world. Instead of learning to become creative, independent, self-reliant, and think for themselves, most people learn how to obey and intelligently follow rules to keep the corporate machine humming.

Developing the Leader in you to live your highest life, then, requires a process of unlearning by self-remembering and self-honoring. Being an effective leader again will require you to be brave and unlock the door to your inner attic, where your childhood dreams lie, going inside to the heart. Here are ten easy steps you can take to awaken the Leader in you and rekindle your passion for greatness.

1. **Humility.** Leadership starts with humility. To be a highly successful leader, you must first humble yourself like a little child and be willing to serve others. Nobody wants to follow

someone who is arrogant. Be humble as a child, always curious, always hungry and thirsty for knowledge. For what is excellence but knowledge. Plus knowledge - always wanting to better yourself, always improving, always growing. When you are humble, you become genuinely interested in people because you want to learn from them. And because you want to learn and grow, you will be a far more effective listener, which is the number one leadership communication tool. When people sense you are genuinely interested in them and listening to them, they will naturally be interested in you and listen to what you have to say.

2. **SWOT Yourself.** SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Although it is a strategic management tool taught at Stanford and Harvard Business Schools and used by large multinationals, it can just as effectively be used for your own professional development as a leader. This is a useful key to gain access to self-knowledge, self-remembering, and self-honoring. Start by listing all your Strengths including your accomplishments. Then write down all your Weaknesses and what needs to be improved. Make sure to include any doubts, anxieties, fears, and worries that you may have. These are the demons and dragons guarding the door to your inner attic. By bringing them to conscious awareness you can begin to slay them. Then proceed by listing all the Opportunities you see available to you for using your strengths. Finally, write down all the Threats or obstacles that are currently blocking you or that you think you will encounter along the way to achieving your dreams.

3. **Follow Your Bliss.** Regardless of how busy you are, always take the time to do what you love doing. Being an alive and vital person vitalizes others. When you are pursuing your passions, people around you cannot help but feel impassioned by your presence. This will make you a charismatic leader. Whatever it is that you enjoy doing, be it writing, acting, painting, drawing, photography, sports, reading, dancing, networking, or working on

entrepreneurial ventures, set aside time every week, ideally two or three hours a day, to pursue these activities. Believe me, you'll find the time. If you were to videotape yourself for a day, you would be shocked to see how much time goes to waste!

4. **Dream Big.** If you want to be larger than life, you need a dream that is larger than life. Small dreams will not serve you or anyone else. It takes the same amount of time to dream small than it does to dream big. So be Big and be Bold! Write down your One Biggest Dream. The one that excites you the most. Remember, do not be small and realistic; be bold and unrealistic! Go for the Gold, the Pulitzer, the Nobel, the Oscar, the highest you can possibly achieve in your field. After you have written down your dream, list every single reason why you CAN achieve your dream instead of worrying about why you can not.

5. **Vision.** Without a vision, we perish. If you cannot see yourself winning that award and feel the tears of triumph streaming down your face, it is unlikely you will be able to lead yourself or others to victory. Visualize what it would be like accomplishing your dream. See it, smell it, taste it, hear it, feel it in your gut.

6. **Perseverance.** Victory belongs to those who want it the most and stay in it the longest. Now that you have a dream, make sure you take consistent action every day. I recommend doing at least five things every day that will move you closer to your dream.

7. **Honor Your Word.** Every time you break your word, you lose power. Successful leaders keep their word and their promises. You can accumulate all the toys and riches in the world, but you only have one reputation in life. Your word is gold. Honor it.

8. **Get a Mentor.** Find yourself a mentor. Preferably someone who has already achieved a high degree of success in your field. Do not be afraid to ask. You have got nothing to lose. Mentors.ca is an excellent mentoring website and a great resource for finding local mentoring

programs. They even have a free personal profile you can fill out in order to potentially find you a suitable mentor. In addition to mentors, take a time to study autobiographies of great leaders that you admire. Learn everything you can from their lives and model some of their successful behaviors.

**9. Be Yourself.** Use your relationships with mentors and your research on great leaders as models or reference points to work from, but never copy or imitate them like a parrot. Everyone has vastly different leadership styles. History books are filled with leaders who are soft-spoken, introverted, and quiet, all the way to the other extreme of being outspoken, extroverted, and loud, and everything in between. A quiet and simple Gandhi or a soft-spoken peanut farmer named Jimmy Carter, who became president of the United States and won a Nobel Peace Prize, have been just as effective world leaders as a loud and flamboyant Churchill, or the tough leadership style employed by The Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher. I admire Hemingway as a writer. But if I copy Hemingway, would be a second or third rate Hemingway, at best, instead of a first rate Sharif. Be yourself, your best self, always competing against yourself and bettering yourself, and you will become a first rate YOU instead of a second-rate somebody else.

**10. Give.** Finally, be a giver. Leaders are givers. By giving, you activate a universal law as sound as gravity life gives to the giver, and takes from the taker. The more you give, the more you get. If you want more love, respect, support, and compassion, give love, give respect, give support, and give compassion. Be a mentor to others. Give back to your community. As a leader, the only way to get what you want is by helping enough people get what they want first. As Sir Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give."

Leadership is a highly unique form of human behavior that requires the integration of character, knowledge, and experience. So, what can you do if you step up and unleash your leadership potential? Change the world. To be able to change the world, you must change yourself first. Change for the better you. If you are able to learn from the stories you have just read and equip yourself with the tips and steps written in this manuscript, then you are going to your success as a leader and as an empowered woman. Your journey to unleashing your leadership potential begins with a great understanding of yourself. Discover your personality traits and how they relate to leadership.

Thank you so much for being a part of our journey and we look forward to helping you thrive as a leader in the years to come. Take care and God bless. Now we hope of course you enjoy and listen to all sisters who are part of this project. Continue to read on and lead on.

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# Leading Organizational Change: A New Model for the Future

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The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of female leaders and their role in using nonlinear models of change to influence organizational change. This study was designed to determine how approaches to change leadership deployed by female leaders contribute new information and principles to the field of organizational change. This study examined the nonlinear change approaches of fourteen senior female leaders in large corporations. While female leaders are increasing in the executive suite, research around their role in change leadership remains limited. This qualitative, phenomenological study examined how fourteen female leaders used different strategies and approaches to lead organizational change. Their experiences, documented through the interview data, encompassed their personal philosophies and approaches in influencing change initiatives.

The female leaders in this study shared five key strategies that they used to lead change:

- (1) Relatedness Strategies,
- (2) Inclusion Strategies,
- (3) Experiential Learning Methods,
- (4) Radar-emotion Detection Strategies, and
- (5) Authenticity and Trust Strategies. This study shed light on new methods and approaches for leading complex organizational change from a female perspective in corporations.

# **Learning from Examples. Women Business Mentoring and Gender Equality in Companies<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This study is part of the Scientific Research and Technological Development Project FFI2016-76753-C2-2-P, «Moral Neuroeducation for Applied Ethics», financed by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

## **Abstract**

Few women occupying business leadership positions and the existence of gender stereotypes can imply lack of role models where these professionals are reflected. Consequently, leadership models are lacking from which professional women can learn. So although there is a shortage of mentors for women, their role is still very important in building gender equality in companies. If we consider that mentors influence the construction of the leadership model that will later be implemented by professional women in their day-to-day work, then we need to know what role commitment to gender equality plays in the construction of this leadership model.

To know it, we rely on the study of popular management literature for women. Thus the speech found in that literature serves to reinforce the relationship of women with the mentor. However, we believe that it does this, but in such a way that it depoliticizes the struggle for gender equality in companies. This means that certain behaviors that do not incorporate the feminist struggle are prioritized in the leadership learning process of women through mentorship. From our point of view, this reality implies that the mentoring action does not contribute to teach a transformative model of leadership to professional women.

From an ethical perspective, we point out that the relations between professional women and mentors in companies have the potential to fully transform the organizational culture. But mentorship needs to be based on values such as justice and equality. For this reason, we need to lead the depoliticized discourse inscribed in popular management literature to incorporate gender equality into women's leadership learning processes. In summary, our main focus is to reflect on the need to promote mentoring among women as an educational tool to improve senior managerial gender equality. Finally, it will be emphasized that women networking are vital to achieve gender equality in business from a feminist perspective.

This study is part of the Scientific Research and Technological Development Project FFI2016-76753-C2-2-P, «Moral Neuroeducation for Applied Ethics», financed by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

## **Key words**

Mentoring, women's leadership, business ethics, feminism, gender equality.

## Introduction

The few women who occupy business management positions is a result of the unequal gender roles that perpetuate material and symbolic obstacles. These women find themselves in traditionally masculine spaces, where women are perceived as being out of place because they do not correspond to the rational-masculinized norm (Ford, 2006). At the same time, as there are very few role models of women leaders, those women who are preparing to join the business world or who study in business schools to become managers, are usually forced to play according to male rules which, in many cases, are strange to them.

For this reason, we understand that mentoring can be a great educational tool when subverting this unequal situation because it would allow the few women leaders who exist in the world of the company to teach their experiences and knowledge to other women. This would promote more women attempting to undertake their professional career in the company, and even to occupy leadership positions.

Good mentoring is key to develop any career (Gosh, 2012; D'Abate & Eddy, 2008), but in the case of women, its role is more important and the need to implement it is pressing in different professional fields (Adler, 1991; Fridkis-Gardi, 2011; Blood et al., 2012). Indeed it is the material and symbolic barriers that women face while attempting to access the world of work -(glass ceiling (Segerman-Peck, 1991), glass walls (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Styhre, 2008), and glass cliffs (Ryan & Haslam, 2005))- that make us consider the promotion of mentoring and support networks among women as optimal ways to give equal opportunities to women, as they are repeatedly excluded from professional networks copied by men (Luci, 2010).

### 1. Gender inequality in business leadership

We start by recognizing gender inequality in the business world (Acker, 2006), an issue in which supranational organizations and governments play a central role. This situation of inequality has been recognized by the European Union as one of the most important problems of European companies in the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality (European Union, 2016b). The stark reality is that “in 2010 fewer than 3% of CEOs of the largest companies in the EU were women” (European Union, 2011, p. 6). In addition, there is “lack of suitable role models, mentors, sponsors and networking opportunities” (European Union, 2016a, p.25).

In order to subvert this situation at the European level, various organizations have been created, such as European Women on Boards, a network that brings together leading European associations which work for the equal representation of women on company boards. Its program includes the creation of a Europe-wide register of female directors that companies can access, various international mentoring and training initiatives, and a platform for exchanging best practice.

In line with this, there is also the European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors, which was inaugurated in 2009. The aim of ambassadors is to act as role models by telling their story to raise awareness and to encourage entrepreneurship as a career option for women of all ages. Many ambassadors have gone beyond this, and also have become actively involved in supporting the establishment of new businesses. Moreover, there is the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs, which was inaugurated in 2011. This network provides advice and support to women entrepreneurs on the start-up, management and growth of their businesses in early phases.

As we can see, lack of role models and mentoring programs for professional women is a recognized problem at the European level. The commitment of supranational entities, such as the European Union, in solving it is important. Although the main reasons of this institution for transforming this inequality are economic or related to profitability (Medina-Vicent, 2015). Lack of promotion of women in the company can generate a vicious circle in which fewer women wish to access the company, much less, to decision-making positions (Hoyt & Simon, 2011).

From our point of view, support networks, along with mentoring, are important for transforming that situation because the business world is governed by networks of contacts, esteem and reputation. In that sense, women are at risk since it is more complicated to join these networks, and without them, possible promotions based on recommendations from other colleagues condemn them to the base of the labor pyramid. For this reason, the European Union through actions such as the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs helps to promote this kind of awareness among professional women and the companies themselves. It should be noted, however, that it is also vital for women workers themselves to push their own professional networks.

In summary, in this work we aim to achieve the following objectives. Firstly, to highlight the lack of role models of professional women in the company. Secondly, to identify the risks that this absence entails for gender equality. Thirdly, to highlight the role of popular management literature in promoting women's mentoring, and if this mentoring model is based on values of feminism. Finally, we point out that feminist values must be incorporated into the relationships between mentors and mentees because this is the only way that a truly egalitarian enterprise can be promoted. To achieve this reality, it is necessary to promote ethics of solidarity between professional women and their feminist conscience in the company.

## **2. Mentoring as a learning source**

Learning from others' experience can be of much help to climb in the business world. With women, the difficulties of accessing the business world and the lack of role models increase their absence in positions of responsibility (Gilardi, 2015). This reality combined with difficulties to access support networks paralyzes their activity at the doors of senior management. Thus in order to empower professional women to positions of responsibility within the company, they need to establish relationships between professionals and to learn from the experience of others, but above all, from the experience of other women. The development of a practice that can contribute to allow more professionals to incorporate into business management positions is therefore proposed. We are talking about mentoring among professional women.

From our perspective, the relationship of a professional woman with another woman mentor may be more fruitful since the latter has overcome obstacles that a man in the same position has not. When we speak of mentoring, we refer to "a practice by which two people, one of them with a wealth of experience in the world of work and in the company, and the other with a special talent that wants to develop in the organization, undertake for a limited period of time to share their experiences with a specific objective: to contribute to the personal and professional development of the mentee" (Rodríguez, 2006). In principle, it might seem that this practice is neutral, but as everything that is happening in the company, it is crossed by the gender issue.

However, beyond the inequality that can permeate the mentoring process, its development could help women in different areas of their profession. A study conducted by authors Terry Morehead, Virginia Maurer, and Cindy A. Schipani (2012) concludes that mentorships are helpful in three key areas: (1) career planning, coaching, and guidance (30%); (2) protection and career risk

management (24%); and (3) increasing aspiration level and providing a role model (21%). At the same time, slightly more males than females have reported exposure, viability and sponsorship as being helpful. Moreover, numerous researchers believe that via effective mentoring programs, women can become more successful in organizations in terms of both higher salaries and more frequent promotions (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Baugh & Scandura, 1999; Ragins et al., 2000).

As you can see, mentoring among professional women can be beneficial to develop their careers and to access leadership positions. Therefore we wonder, why are so few mentee women? According to Margaret Lineham and Hugh Scullion, the shortage of mentoring relationships must be due to, among other things, "mentors may not select female protect" (Linehan & Scullion, 2008, p. 31). That is to say, there is a tendency by which mentors (men) tend to pick men as their "protected". In addition, women tend to be reticent about approaching a prospective mentor (man) for fear that the relationship that they could create could be interpreted by the rest of peers as sexual (Clawson & Kram, 1984, pp. 26-27). Evidently, this would be counterproductive for them as it would create enmity within the organization itself.

For this reason, professional women prefer to approach other women to start a mentoring relationship. Yet due to the shortage of these figures in the company, the task becomes more complex. For example, in the case of Lisa Quast, lack of female mentors during her own career was one of the key reasons why she created The Wing to Wing Women's Mentoring Project ([www.Wing2WingProject.org](http://www.Wing2WingProject.org)) to inspire women to reach out to other women and, through the simple act of offering guidance and insight, help them achieve their personal and professional aspirations (Quast, 2009).

As we can see, organizational processes are not neutral, but are vertebrated by gender stereotypes and assumptions that are detrimental to the professional relationships between men and women (Wajcman, 1998; Heilman, 2001; Agars, 2004). For this reason, we need to be aware of the perpetuation of gender inequality in companies.

### **3. Promoting mentoring among professional women**

It is necessary to make two claims about the gender inequality situation that we have just addressed. Firstly, to recognize the idea that business organizations are not neutral, and that their structures are based on gender inequality. Recognizing this idea will allow the company to act in order to transform the business sphere. Secondly, we believe that it is important that women who have a consolidated and comprehensive career lend themselves to this type of activity with other women in need of someone to teach them to move in a traditionally male world.

As a result, we focus on mentoring among women, and do not exclude these processes to men, because the female experience that overcomes obstacles on gender grounds is not the same as that which men have lived. Therefore, the first ones can more accurately illustrate the barriers that women face in their professional careers within the company.

In addition, women who reach positions of business relevance, pioneers in the development of these charges, have been able to lay the foundations of leadership for other women. Valerie Stead and Carole Elliott (2009) collected the testimonies of nine women leaders in the UK, all of whom are pioneers in their respective fields. On the basis of their analysis, the authors concluded that by having no predecessors, these leaders have had to create themselves in solitude. This is why we agree with the authors in that "being exposed to other senior women can help women leaders find ways in which they want to lead" (Stead & Elliott, 2009, p. 72).

In other words, mentoring is important for professional women as it allow them to integrate the practices and experiences of other women to deal with public sphere barriers. At the end of the day, the figure of the mentor enables these women's personal and professional development by empowering them toward leadership from their own self-knowledge. Thus mentoring promotes the efficacy of both the business organization and workers through learning from others who have already faced the same problems and situations. So in addition to educating the mencee, the mentor serves as a catalyst for contacts by enabling the mentee to gain access to power and decision-making networks.

#### **4. Institutionalize mentoring**

However, we believe that it is important to not leave the initiative of mentoring in the hands of individual workers. The organization must be committed to mentoring programs that not only create more mentor-mentee relationships, but also increase the company's productivity through these relationships. At the same time, we consider it vital that moral values such as equality should be strengthened while developing these programs.

In this regard, it should be noted that more and more companies incorporate the mentoring methodology for pre-directive women as a tool for education and to promote leadership positions among all company members. In the report called *Inspiring. Cases of success in gender diversity*, carried out by consultant PwC Spain (2014), various cases can be consulted, such as IBM or Telefonica, companies that are developing mentoring programs to promote women's leadership (Isotès, 2014, pp. 41-69). Without entering the individual consideration of all these programs, our intention is to identify their implementation by recognizing a new need in the business world: to promote the presence of women in management positions.

Finally, it should be emphasized that "the role of mentors that women themselves can successfully perform will be a way of gradually changing the patterns of marginalization and discrimination towards women in the workplace" (Ortega-Liston, Morales & Cadena, 2013, p. 150). Mentoring among women can become a key step in promoting gender equality in companies, but the company must provide the resources and tools for it to efficiently develop.

#### **5. Mentoring in the Popular Management Literature for Women**

Popular management literature combines a series of ideas present in the economic thought and determines the performance of the manager of a modern business organisation. Such literature represents the dominant ideology of the company's management levels because it directly addresses this public (Alonso & Fernández Rodríguez, 2013a). Normally it centres on the works written by these so-called management gurus (Clark & Salaman, 2012) who occupy prestigious posts in the business world. So moral values of discourse on excellent management are key to outline the management model demanded in companies, and which is taught in Business Schools.

Traditionally, these works address a masculine management public because of the male pre-eminence in business management posts. Nowadays this reality is extending, and it seems that the publishing world of management literature has set its sights on professional women, and on female managers and/or leaders. From a critical viewpoint, reflecting on management literature for women is absolutely necessary given their power to conjure up a specific image of women who occupy management posts in companies. Indeed if we bear in mind that such discourse "represents the ideology of those who hold power within business organisations (businesspeople, managers, directors or intermediate levels)" (Alonso & Fernández Rodríguez, 2013a: 44), then approaching this literature will allow us to identify the company's perception of the gender equality issue.

If we focus on the popular management literature for women, although it is not its central theme, we can find mentions of mentoring as a good way to ascend in the company (Babcock & Laschever, 2009; Balabram, 2009; Harris, 2010; Sandberg, 2013; Frankel, 2014; Annis & Gray, 2014; Cohen, 2015). However, our aim here is to ask ourselves about the values on which this argument is based. In other words, is the support for mentoring on this literature based on moral reasons (achievement of equality) or purely on economic interests?

After analyzing the cited works, we identify a tendency toward using reasons that focus more on achieving profitability than on values such as equality. From our point of view, this fact is interesting because in order to promote gender equality in the company, moral values like equality and justice must be found in the implementation of mentoring, and not only profitability values. By taking this into account, we consider that extending the vision of mentoring in this specific type of literature, and in the business world in general, extremely important to promote values such as justice and equality over economic profitability.

## **6. Building support networks among women**

As mentioned above, mentoring can be an optimal way to promote the presence of women in managerial positions as this practice allows to establish support relationships between women with the same objective: to develop their professional career and to access a position of responsibility in their companies. At the same time, the creation of support networks and contacts between these women can help to achieve the same goal, as Stead and Elliott point out: "networks (...) are important in supporting, motivating and sustaining women in their leadership practice" (2009, p.108). However, we must remember that for these relationships to be truly transforming, they must take equality and justice as their central values, something that only feminism can lend us.

The solitude of a male world isolates women leaders and makes the creation of networks for them difficult. There is the possibility that these women become "alibi women": "The kind of woman who, for a variety of circumstances, is in professional or political areas traditionally reserved for men, and her analysis of an unusual situation attributes its success to the help and cooperation received from those, passing to defend the thesis that women who do not reach the same heights of success if they do is because of themselves (they are comfortable, unable, do not have a will, etc.)" (Sau, 1981, p. 215).

These women are placed in positions of social relevance, and not for their merits, but for strategic issues. As a result, they are transformed into a barrier to create support networks for other women as they do not recognize the sexual structures of domination that lie behind their presence in the business world. These exceptional women are examples who serve to legitimize the dearth of women in positions of public relevance, to feel privileged for having managed to go so far, do not collaborate with other women, and are converted into women of exception (Valcárcel, 2009, p. 23). This means that although their presence in a place as the public sphere is out of the ordinary, it does not contribute to transform the perception of their sex.

The reluctance of such women to collaborate with other professional women makes it difficult to establish support networks between them, apart from difficulties to enter the traditional networks subscribed by men (Timberlake, 2005, p. 41). Lack of feminist engagement of many professional women can end up making the promotion of women to leadership positions even more difficult. For this reason, we believe it necessary to promote feminist consciousness among professional women to initiate programs of mentoring and professional networks on the values of justice and equality.

## **7. Ethics of solidarity**

At this point we are clear that the alliance between women becomes necessary to promote equality in the company. But the alliance is understood as solidarity between women. The ethics of solidarity proposed by philosopher Amelia Valcárcel (1997) allows us to discern the importance of combining the development of our individuality with a collective consciousness of being women, something that involves mutual support for those who carry out actions by feminist emancipation in any social field. The individual development that involves the future of every woman's career must be combined with the development of the feminist struggle itself: the search for equality between women and men in the social framework.

In this sense, we will emphasize that both mentoring and the creation of professional networks should be based on a feminist conception of social relations, because only in this way could the mentoring practice promote a change in gender stereotypes in the company. Valcárcel stressed the need to articulate the individualistic basis of the feminist philosophy with the collective claims of a "we" (women). That is to say, from the individual awareness of inequality in which we find ourselves as women to take a step forward to change our lives while we change the social structures that legitimize inequality. This operation involves constituting a collective subject.

In our opinion, mentoring and professional networks can become nodes of the political struggle against gender inequality within the company, but only if they are developed with the ultimate objective of promoting gender equality in the company and providing equal opportunities to both women and men.

## **8. Conclusion**

In a crisis and globalization context, it is vital to address the presence of women in business management positions because we can obtain a lot of information on the distribution of power between men and women within organizations (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). This study allows us to remark that "women's career advancement may be limited either reduced access to role models and mentors, which then equates to less access to opportunities for learning about how they might overcome difficulties and barriers in their careers" (Stead & Elliott, 2009, p. 142).

From a feminist point of view, mentoring and networking are two educational tools that promote partnerships among professional women. Our central task is to note that the model of a woman leader that is promoted on the basis of these practices must contribute to the feminist struggle for equality and against stereotypes (Mavin et al., 2016). For this reason, relationships among professional women should be based on sisterhood as an experience that leads to the search for positive relationships, and also to the existential and political alliance (Lagarde, 1996). Given the importance of this issue, we believe that the mentoring and networking should be promoted by business ethics (Cortina, 2003; García-Marzá, 2004) by emphasizing the gender perspective (Medina-Vicent, 2016).

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# **Mainstreaming Gender in Medical Education: Developing Gender Competence Indicators for Tomorrow's Doctors and Psychiatric Clerkship Teaching Programs**

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Education has an indisputable role in advancing gender equality. This study focuses on and investigates the education of gender awareness training of tomorrow's doctors and doctors-to-be of Psychiatry Department. We think that integrating gender mainstreaming into medical education requires an established framework of gender competency indicators. Gender competency indicators are the guideline and goal of mainstreaming gender in medical education and designs systematically the gender knowledge and ability criteria of medical students. Therefore, this study will employ the methods of panel studies and praxis-oriented action research, including questionnaires, focus groups and participant observation for data collecting, to develop gender competence indicators for medical students in basic medical education and psychiatric clerkship teaching programs. The study emphasizes that systematical and consistent structure of gender competence indicators will effectively integrates gender knowledge into medical and clinical education as the foundation for developing medical course and teaching with gender perspectives.

Gender competence indicators would connect gender with medical education and serve as reference for assessment. In other words, the indicators will be applied to plan the curriculum and to construct the core concept in gender-related medical abilities. Furthermore, gender competence indicators, as the evaluation of medical gender learning effect, will enhance integration of gender consciousness and competence into medical education and clinical training and also help develop perspectives on gender in medical curriculums and instruction. Gender competence indicators will empower medical students to acquire gender knowledge. Finally, embedded gender issue in medical education by gender competence indicators, we regard its meaning as the acknowledgement of different sexes of doctors-to-be through systematical gender knowledge and ability construction. With such fulfillment, when different sexes access to medical resource and service, they will gain the equality of medical right and resource.

Keywords: gender mainstreaming, gender competence, gender competence indicators, medical education, action research

# **Making the Link between Family-Friendly Work Practices and Turnover Intention**

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## ABSTRACT

### Research Objectives

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, drawing from the efficiency wage theory, we empirically examine a conceptual model proposing that family friendly work practices (FFWPs) are negatively related to actual turnover rates at the firm level. Second, based on theories of social identification, needs-supplies (N-S) fit, and conservation of resources, we test a mediational model that links FFWPs to turnover intentions via organizational prestige, N-S fit, and work-family conflict (WFC) at the individual level.

### Methodology

The authors tested the effect of FFWPs on actual turnover at the organizational level based on data from HR managers (n = 165) in various companies in Japan. On the other hand, using data from fulltime employees (n = 900) in Japan, we conducted time-lagged analysis to test the mediational model of the impact of FFWPs on turnover intentions.

### Findings

The results indicated the direct predictive effect of FFWPs on organizational-level turnover rates. Moreover, the findings showed that FFWPs indirectly influenced turnover intentions through organizational prestige and N-S fit, but not through WFC.

### Discussion of Outcomes

These findings may contribute to FFWPs literature by providing much needed empirical evidence on the link between FFWPs and voluntary employee turnover at the organizational-level (Bloom et al., 2011). Also, we might extend our understanding of the mechanism by which FFWPs influence turnover intentions at the individual level by exploring potential mediators, such as organizational prestige and N-S fit. Especially, unlike conventional knowledge that FFWPs decrease actual turnover rates by buffering work-family conflicts, our findings imply that FFWPs lower employee turnover through improving employees' organizational prestige and N-S fit perceptions. We expect that this study sheds light on the question of causal direction, that is, whether FFWPs lower employee turnover at the firm-level, and whether and if so how employees' perceptions of FFWPs influence their turnover intentions.

### Keywords

Family-friendly work practices, turnover intention, voluntary turnover, organizational prestige, needs-supplies fit, work-family conflict

# **“Navigating patriarchy: Narratives from the Maasai in Kenya”**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Underrepresentation of women in governance structures is a global phenomenon, with patriarchal considerations being among the main, if not the top reason for this in Sub Saharan Africa. This paper demonstrates that gender norms and informal rules have perpetuated a culture of stereotypical gender roles that have limited women's public participation and leadership in society.

To achieve this, the paper explores barriers to women's political engagement, and how these are navigated in the face of gender equality laws. Situated in Kenya's Maasai community, the paper investigates the influence of set laws on the increased involvement of women from patriarchal communities in the political economy. It gives special attention to the intersectionality of formal and informal laws and the subsequent interpretation and implementation of gender equality. The paper then concludes by demonstrating the benefits of exploring alternative gender equality pathways, as informed by contextual realities of such peculiar settings as patriarchal societies.

*Key words: Kenya, Women, Equality, Public participation, Patriarchy.*

## INTRODUCTION

This study is founded on the hypothesis that, for public participation to be effective, there needs to be a discussion on how communities that stand to be affected would like the same operationalised. The same is to be approached in a manner that respects local realities without losing objectivity, and actually creating an effective platform for pro-citizen policy making. This hypothesis is supported by the findings of John Gaventa in his exploration of citizenship, participation and accountability, where he notes that little has been done to understand ‘‘how poor people themselves perceive their rights, how these meanings are acted upon through political or social mobilisation, and how they are bounded by issues of knowledge and representation, as well as by differences in identity’’ (Gaventa 2002:6). This process of perception to action transcends poverty to encompass all matters requiring socio-political mobilisation. Proper location of citizen participation therefore calls for engagement with issues of space and place, since public space is something that can be created and reshaped.

Equal treatment of citizens is a clear mandate under the Constitution of Kenya’s Bill of Rights under Article 27(3); *Women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres*. Article 56 of the Constitution goes a step further in stating that; *The State shall put in place affirmative action programmes designed to ensure that minorities and marginalised groups — (a) participate and are represented in governance and other spheres of life*. This is an express call for the inclusion of women and youth who have historically been underrepresented.

More specifically, the Kenya National Human Rights and Equality Commission is established under Article 59 (1), with one of its key functions as spelt out in subsection (2) (b) being, *to promote gender equality and equity generally and to coordinate and facilitate gender mainstreaming in national development*. All these efforts are aimed at promoting and increasing the substantive representation of all citizens and especially women.

Descriptive representation, characterised by the acting of an individual as a representative or advocate of a homogenous group that they belong to, is guaranteed by ensuring that women are adequately represented in public office. Article 27 (8) states that the *State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender*. This is supplemented by Article 97 (1) (b) which spells out that; *The National Assembly consists of forty-seven women, each elected by the registered voters of the counties, each county constituting a single member constituency*. This intersection of laws and provisions provide an equal platform for citizens to engage in decision making processes that define participatory governance as envisioned from devolution.

In the following sections, the paper describes the approach used, followed by a brief description of gender politics among the Maasai, and a case study on Maasai women of Kajiado and Narok Counties in Kenya. It then highlights the community’s suggested approaches to overcoming barriers to women’s public participation. It concludes by demonstrating that gender equality laws do not necessary work as envisioned, and openness

to alternative engagement mechanisms is important in marking the first steps towards increased public participation by women.

## **APPROACH**

The study focuses on Maasai women and their engagement in political processes within Kenya's devolution structure. The choice of focus on the Maasai community is informed by documented evidence of the influential patriarchal considerations that inform agency and power relations within the community (Hodgson, 1999; Spencer, 2003; Parsimei, 2013; Taeko, 2014). These considerations have continued to exclude women from political spaces and limit their access to economic resources, relegating them to being dependants on men and under-represented in decision making platforms.

This scenario calls for amendments if increased engagement of women is to be realised in the community. Approaching this initiative from the lowest administrative hierarchies is important, as these are closest to the people and therefore better positioned to understand local norms and how best to formulate engagement mechanisms. This knowledge is crucial in promoting active citizenship which ultimately contributes to increased participation by women in the Kenyan political arena. Gender equality at the national level cannot be realised in the absence of the very required subjects at the local ward level. Should this be the case, it would signify the presence of certain class of women, one with not only the exposure and knowledge on political processes, but most importantly, from backgrounds that support them in the endeavour. Most Maasai women are not privy to such privilege.

Against this background, this article adopts a case study approach, as informed by the added value of a case study in addressing causal complexities. Being among the pioneering works on the political role of Maasai women, a case study approach gives room for the elaboration of causal mechanisms that can further explore these women's agency. Their choice as study subject is especially supported by the observation by Parsimei (2013) that they have become dormant, and increasingly unaware of social and political injustices, knowledge of which is obtained from the continuous process of critical thinking and acting upon solving community problems. In this regard, they are a fitting target group for which citizen engagement as an integral part of devolved government as envisioned in Chapter 11 of the Constitution of Kenya.

Data herein was collected from several locations in Kajiado and Narok Counties where the Maasai community is dominant. Focus was on identifying factors that have contributed to the marginalisation of Maasai women in Kenya's public/political spaces and examining current strategies of engaging Maasai women in decision making within the new devolution structure. This exercise was carried out between March and May 2016.

Specifically, it investigated, from the citizens' point of view, barriers to Maasai women's public engagement, and how the same can be dealt with. This was informed by analysing the composition and engagement processes in ward and sub county citizen forums. From the study locations, data was collected by following two main methods: participant observation in an organized county government citizen forum, and focus group discussions: in groups of eight, I discussed engagement mechanisms in women-only groups, men-only groups and

mixed groups. The objective of this approach was to check on how men and women evaluate gender inclusivity in public engagement, and whether their responses vary in men/women-only forums.

## **GENDER POLITICS AMONG THE MAASAI**

According to statistics by the New World Encyclopedia (2015), the Maasai community makes up 841,622 of Kenya's 44.35 Million population. Though relatively small in comparison, the community plays a big role in the embodiment of traditions in a largely modernised country. The Maasai also tend to inhabit areas around national parks, making them important actors in the tourism sector which is critical in Kenya's economy. Their minority status notwithstanding therefore, they ought to be engaged in the design and implementation of policy processes, and in manner that grants equality to both men and women in the community.

As Omwami (2011) however notes, patriarchal considerations far outweigh any interventions that would change the relational space in male dominated environments. Marginalisation of women thus becomes inevitable, frustrating efforts to improve women's position within the political realm (Ibid, 2011). Among the Maasai, gendered separation has resulted in women's absence from political spheres of public meetings and delegations, resulting in a lack of involvement in politics and public affairs (Hodgson, 1999).

In examining Maasai women's experiences in the complexity of literacy, Taeko (2014) notes that women's voices are heard and have an impact on the implementation of projects within their created space of women groups, but have insignificant effect on the community's decision-making processes. This, he explains, is because they rarely attend political initiatives to challenge discrimination and prejudice. This phenomenon is attributed to their role as home managers and care givers, which leaves them little time for engagements outside the domestic space, and especially not those that would require investment in time and transport costs as most political engagements tend to. Without the requirement for domestic domicile, men are at an advantaged position with increased mobility.

Notably, there is only one Maasai woman elected to parliament in Kenya today - Mrs. Peris Tobiko – from 11 parliamentary seats in the predominantly Kajiado and Narok Counties. She is also the first Maasai woman Member of Parliament in the country's history. To achieve this, it is reported that she had to overcome threats, alienation and curses from Maasai elders for 'trying to be a man' (Ndonga, 2013). Relatively speaking, for a Maasai population of approximately 840,000, their half – 420,000 being women represents about 0.95% of the Kenyan population. 3.3 female Maasai are required to represent this population but as the only one, Ms. Tobiko's representation stands at only 0.28% which is a significant underrepresentation.

Customary rules of civic engagement and separation of power among the Maasai can be traced to the incorporation of subjects into the state system under colonial administration. The pre-existing complementary, interconnected responsibilities of men and women were divided into "spatially separated, hierarchically gendered domains of 'domestic' and 'public/political' and the consolidation of male control over cattle through the commodification of livestock,

monetization of the Maasai economy and targeting of men for development interventions” (Hodgson 1999:43). The incorporation reinforced male political authority and economic control by expanding the bases for political power and introducing new forms of property relations.

Hodgson reiterates that this led to women's access to, and participation in political decision-making processes being curtailed, thus their relegation to the domestic concerns of home and homestead (Ibid, 1999). This intersection of a favoured position of economic interests and patriarchal influences has perpetuated the disadvantaged socio-political and economic status of Maasai women.

The women’s freedoms of expression and socio-economic development have been affected by a lack of direct access to resources, limiting their capacity for development. Colonialism replaced the multifaceted property systems with a homogenous system of private property among the Maasai (Hodgson, 2001). This undermined women's property rights and ignored their pre-existing role in public political decisions, as ownership rights shifted from being communal to private, and under male authority. It is on this premise that Paul Spencer’s 2003 ethnographic study of the Maasai, describes the women as powerless and passive bystanders in the Maasai social organisation structure. The widespread inability to balance domestic duties and political engagement has led most Maasai women to choose the former, leaving men to dominate the public space and be the decision makers.

Characteristic of this patriarchal set-up, considerations for age and paternity pay a big role in establishing power relations. At the core of it, women are supposed to respect men and do their best to avoid confrontations in both private and public spheres. Defiance invites physical abuse in the domestic front and shunning or even curses in the public space. Respondents in the author’s ongoing study reported that widespread fear of curses from men pervades and is believed to affect not only the present, but also future generations. The curses are verbally dispensed and in a public set-up for severity. With widespread Christianity, most do not believe in the power of the curses but a woman will still avoid contradicting and confronting men publicly as this would taint her image and soil her family name. This phenomenon limits women’s freedom to participate and contribute to public affairs, choosing instead to complain in the safe space of women group meetings, with the hope that their counter arguments will reach the decision makers through the groups’ chairladies. The chairladies tend to be brave, from well-respected families and enjoy support from their husbands to engage in public and political affairs.

Ageism and male dominance also play a big role in denying women justice. Women are expected to respect all adult men, even if they are younger than the women. It is therefore very common that cases reported to the Chief fall through the cracks, especially if they involve injustices carried out by men. As one respondent narrated;

In places like this, the chief is a Maasai as our men. The chief is head in his house and carries this attitude to the office and so he will side with the man...You cannot even go reporting a man no matter what he does. No one will listen to you unless you find one (a chief) who is not a Maasai or if you report the matter to a higher office.

Otherwise no one here pays any attention.<sup>1</sup>

Cases of unfair sale of land and livestock, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early child marriages are therefore not fairly dealt with. Chiefs opt to settle such matters with male leaders, and by passing judgements that favour men. Lack of access to higher authority leaves women prone to injustices orchestrated and perpetrated by men. Citing the case of an old man who married a child, a respondent narrated;

He was a really old man with adult children, but he was only held for a few hours and later released. He can speak to the chief and explain that they are of the same age set and stuff like that and next thing you know, he has been released.<sup>2</sup>

A prominent case on this matter is the February 2016 death of Christine Kapaaya from Rombo Ward, Kajiado County: After taking intoxicated tea during the mourning period at a neighbour's home, she was accosted and raped by nine men, thrown into a ditch and later died on arrival at the hospital. The council of elders decided that her family would be given 49 cows in compensation, a solution her family refused. They reported the matter to the Chief and local police but got no alternative assistance and it was only after the story got media attention that the government stepped in to investigate the case<sup>3</sup>. It is yet to be solved.

Christine's case highlights the little worth women hold in the eyes of many men within the community. They are considered men's property, granting no authority to make decisions or control resources. Many women have fallen victim to domestic violence for engaging in activities considered to be men's roles.

There is also a strong correlation between educational attainments, employability and income generation. Maasai women have low literacy levels, with as much as 26.8% of them being illiterate, compared to men's 16.1% illiteracy rate (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004). This highly undermines their capacities in the hierarchical socio-economic structures as literacy promotes self-reliance, problem solving and is a tool for critiquing man-made social structures (Taeko, 2014). This view is supported by Kabeer (2005) in her assertion that changes in women's cognitive ability not only changes power relations in the household, but most importantly enables women to question, reflect and act in ways that promote the gaining of more information and ideas on how to improve their lives. Women issues are multi-dimensional; socio-cultural, traditional and economic factors influencing their status are interlinked. Articulation of their needs is therefore important so as to address the same.

Taeko (2014) reports that Maasai women tend to remain silent due to concerns about their security in the community. Parsimei (2013) reiterates this assertion, noting that men as family heads and other male relatives can become oppressors and exploiters within Maasai families, leading to an inferiority complex in most women. These conditions exacerbate the socio-

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<sup>1</sup> Female Respondent, Nairagie Enkare – Narok East, 19.04.2016.

<sup>2</sup> Female Respondent, Kimuka – Kajiado West, 23.03.2016

<sup>3</sup> NTV (<http://ntv.nation.co.ke/news/national/-/2725528/3173694/-/km0931z/-/index.html>).

political and economic underdevelopment of Maasai women.

The combination of a patriarchal social organisation and illiteracy have promoted a culture where Maasai women remain at the lower position in power structures, with very limited chances of being uplifted to an equal status with men. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 therefore presents itself as a fitting instrument to right this injustice.

## **BARRIERS TO MAASAI WOMEN'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Studies on women's low levels of participation in political processes tend to focus on three inter-related explanatory variables when exploring the lack of gender parity in politics in general: cultural practices and norms, socioeconomics, and institutional factors. This study adopts this approach in understanding the Maasai situation.

### **Socio-cultural barriers**

As earlier mentioned, gendered separation among the Maasai has resulted in women's absence from the public space, severely limiting their input in the community's decision-making processes. Since they are in charge of domestic affairs however, they have little time to spare for political or such other public engagements. They are also relatively poor,<sup>4</sup> which combines with cultural norms on the duties of women to create the 'double-burden' barrier to participation (McNulty, 2015).

They [the men] are now off to their jobs so if there is a political meeting they can go at night and will come back home whenever they wish. But as a woman, you cannot do this; you have to take care of the children, cows and other domestic affairs, but the men have free time.<sup>5</sup>

With the increased awareness and legislative calls for change in engagement mechanisms, women are gradually becoming more visible in the public space. Descriptively speaking, their presence is noteworthy, but it is the substantial element of it that continues to lack. Women are involved, arguably for the sake of numbers, without there being evident commitment to understanding and incorporating their views and opinions. In the best of circumstances, women are given a chance to give a closing or a 'women representation' remark at a public meeting, as was observed at a public meeting in Rombo Ward, Loitokitok Sub-County. In this particular incident, at a meeting with the Member of Parliament as guest of honour, there were over 20 speakers, only 3 of which were women. Of the three, one was from the Ministry of Education, another from a Non-Governmental Organisation that supports pupils at the local school, and only one woman from the community. This lady spoke on behalf of the women in the community, a chance that had been given to more than 10 men of the same community.

It is scenarios such as this that continue to discourage women from participating as they are increasingly aware of the lip service paid to the inclusion of women. They are largely ignored

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<sup>4</sup> The Challenge of Being a Maasai Woman <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/05/the-challenge-of-being-a-maasai-woman/>

<sup>5</sup> Female Respondent, Kimuka, – Kajiado West, 23.03.2016.

by the system which is embedded in patriarchy, forcing them to focus on their domestic duties instead.

...when we hear of such meetings, we do not see the importance of attending because we would only be taking our eyes as we have no opportunity. So we choose to remain at home and do other things. Men tell us whenever they go for meetings and we let them go and choose to focus on our chores as we have no chances in such meetings.<sup>6</sup>

Unsurprisingly, this disregard for the political role of women shapes the sphere of political leadership. The only serving Maasai woman MP, Ms. Tobiko narrated the harsh criticism she faced from the community as her contestation was seen as her trying to be a man. These sentiments are echoed by Ms. Merin, an aspirant for the position of Ward Representative, Rombo Ward. Being a single young mother, she is often criticised for neglecting her role as a mother, choosing instead to fight with men. She has been called *Elkirikoi*<sup>7</sup>, and has been sexually harassed by men who promise to listen to her only after she has granted them sexual favours or agreed to be an additional wife.

It is therefore evident that regardless of the legislative commitment to the inclusivity of women in politics and public affairs by the Kenyan government, the community continues to be governed by norms that are in opposition to this vision. The gendered norms and rules are very powerful and evidently undermine formal changes within the community.

### **Economic barriers**

As aforementioned, Maasai women's freedoms of expression and socio-economic development have been affected by a lack of direct access to resources, limiting their capacity for development. They generally have limited control over property and resources as these are controlled by men as heads of households. Consequently, women are relatively poor and can therefore not afford to meet monetary demands beyond basic needs.

Public participation exercises tend to take place at administrative centres, necessitating travel for those from the villages. Participating in public fora therefore ranks lower for them as they choose to save the little resources they have and instead focus on taking care of domestic chores. The spare time they have for themselves is spent in women groups where they do beadwork, the proceeds of which contribute to meeting household and personal needs. As respondents narrated, calls for attendance to public meetings exclude inhabitants of areas further from administration offices. According to one respondent;

They make announcements for development meetings to be held in the administrative central. Further, they do not provide transport for the people coming from remote areas...This process leaves out the common *mwananchi*<sup>8</sup> because they need to go to the people at the grassroots and ask them what their needs are, and the people give their proposals.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Female respondent, Nairagie Enkare – Narok East, 19.04.2016.

<sup>7</sup> Mainly refers to 'wanderer' in Maa, but could in cases like this loosely translate to 'prostitute'.

<sup>8</sup> Swahili for Citizen

<sup>9</sup> Female respondent, Loitokitok – Kajiado South, 03.03.2016

This was also confirmed by the Narok County Budget Officer who reported that his office only reaches out to 12 locations that are easier to access. This excludes citizens who live in the outskirts, and especially women who cannot afford to take time off their chores for such meetings, or even afford it.

Participants and administration alike depend on the availability of resources to be able to fulfil the participation mandate. The Kenyan Public Finance Management Act of 2012 in conjunction with the County Public Participation Act of 2014 give the public the right to participate throughout the entire budget process, which runs from the formulation of the budget, throughout its implementation, to the evaluation stage. The effectiveness of public participation thus depends on the availability of resources to implement it.

The issue of inadequate resources was prevalent in the discussions with both citizens and economists from Kajiado and Narok Counties, meaning that financial constraints limit the implementation of the participation exercises envisioned.

Specifically, the position of Women Representative is meant to provide special attention to women's issues, which necessitates additional resources. However, unlike the Members of Parliament, those elected as Women Representatives have no development fund allocation. In a political set up that relies heavily on patron-client relationships, the representatives are incapacitated in giving any special assistance to women. This introduces hurdles in the capacity of these representatives to act in the special interest of women.

We believe that the Women Rep is the voice of women in parliament...they have no fund allocations to come help women. If I call her, she comes in her capacity as a friend, not as an MP who has the CDF (Constituency Development Fund) kitty. Our MP has a lot of projects, and no one can oppose him, but the Women Rep only has the name and the salary.<sup>10</sup>

The Women Representatives are however allowed to administer the Uwezo Fund<sup>11</sup> for women and youth, whose equitable distribution has been questioned by the citizens. It has reportedly been overtaken by an elite who have become guaranteed beneficiaries in every allocation cycle, leaving out many other deserving citizens. This is in addition to its demanding and tedious application process that leaves very little room for the illiterate to participate.

In responding to women's complaints on the same, a male respondent, asked the women to be more reflexive of the process;

If my neighbour has benefitted, then I would say I am happy and comfortable because someone has benefitted. But if we all miss out, then there is a gap that could either be on our side or the administration's so when they give feedback, it can be used to bridge this gap. I have heard a lot of women saying they have really tried but they

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<sup>10</sup> Female respondent, Loitokitok – Kajiado South, 03.03.2016

<sup>11</sup> A programme aimed at enabling women, youth and persons with disability access finances to promote businesses and enterprises at the constituency level (<http://www.uwezo.go.ke/>).

never benefit from the public fund. So where is the problem? Is it me who did not fulfil all the obligations, or is it that the whole thing is a hoax?<sup>12</sup>

Financial resources do provide a constraint to the successful realisation of public participation. Jütting et al (2005) point to the reality that local governments may sometimes lack the human and financial resources to effectively implement decentralisation. As the narrations above evidence, the lack of resources in both the domestic and public fronts continue to limit Maasai women's capacity to actively engage in public participation exercises. The women pointed out the need for such to take place within reasonable, preferably walking, distance so they could manage to attend at no cost.

### **Institutional factors**

Although the existing legal framework supports equal inclusion of women, respondents argued that there have been very few efforts to take the gender equality agenda seriously. The dissemination of information on citizen rights and public participation procedures was continuously reported as being absent. Many community members remain unaware of the provisions of the very transformative Constitution that guarantees them a position and a voice in governance procedures. Most voted for the Constitution in 2010 based on hearsay, with men being more knowledgeable thanks to their wide socio-political circles, but almost everyone gaining knowledge based on the administrative failures that play out in public currently.

Both men and women admitted that this is the biggest challenge to gender mainstreaming within the community. Civic education on the Constitution of Kenya 2010 was poor prior to the vote, and the situation prevails six years on.

We are asking the government to come to the grassroots, we sit together and discuss, and for them to explain the Constitution to the community because we don't know. They only come during the campaign period.<sup>13</sup>

The limited civic education carried out was skewed and marred with political interest. Very little, if anything at all, on rights and responsibilities was openly discussed.

There wasn't much of civic education...What there was, is that they told us Christians to refuse Islamic law and legalisation of abortion. As Christians, we chose the Orange (No) and the others were Bananas (Yes). That is how we voted, those who could not express themselves carried oranges as symbols of their vote...But we did not understand what it all meant...As Christians we fought against the legalisation of abortion.<sup>14</sup>

This created a loophole that promotes the apparent lack of political will and commitment to gender equality. Combined with the aforementioned structural barriers, women continue to lack an equal voice in the participatory decision-making processes which would improve their agency and legitimise public participation within the community.

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<sup>12</sup> Male respondent, Nairagie Enkare – Narok East, 21.04.2016

<sup>13</sup> Female respondent, Loitokitok – Kajiado South, 07.03.2016

<sup>14</sup> Female respondent, Kimuka - Kajiado West, 23.03.2016

While women are appointed to development committees at the Ward levels, it is mainly done to fulfil the two thirds gender rule and not really to give a voice or any decision making authority to them. This transcends to other positions in the administration, such as the chiefs, where it is recommended that the Chief and the assistant Chief be representative of both genders. This is so, to make it easier for women to have one of their own to whom they can address their concerns. It however does not work out as envisioned because the women in these positions always have men as colleagues and fellow decision makers. As it is therefore, these men and the structure as is, do little to legitimise these women's positions, clearly outlining the paradox of policy commitments. On a female Chief in the Ewuaso Kedong Ward, it was reported;

In her position, the men just let her be for the sake of it. So it can be seen that she is there...She is there because the government has said she should be...She is there but most decisions are made for her...She is given the opportunity to speak but it is not so that she can say everything. The power is there just because the government created the position...They still say a woman cannot do much...When a woman stands to speak on something they do not like, they use very bad language, asking '*What can a woman say or do?*'...They ask in what capacity that woman gets up to speak to them.<sup>15</sup>

This scenario depicts the infiltration of gender bias into the administration, the consequence of which is a lack of commitment to fulfilling the agenda tasked to the institution. Having women in power without power, Cooke and Kothari (2001) point out, is a failure of participation, not from operation or technique, but as a systemic consequence. In supporting this, Connell (2005) theorises that principle and practice differ in the acceptance of change by men. It is more problematic in the Maasai community since it is the men who, thanks to their political dominance, select women who will join in the committees and even endorse candidates for the Women Representative position.

For example, when Mary Seneta (the Women Representative) expressed political interest, we had not known her previously but we voted for her because the men said they already knew her.<sup>16</sup>

In the Maasai patriarchal set-up, it really matters that the male political class endorses a candidate, otherwise they stand little chance of winning. While it is true that women could do a lot more in nominating and voting for one of their own, the financial requirements in the Kenyan patron - client political set-up excludes many of them from being actively engaged in the political scene. The endorsement of women candidates by men makes it difficult for the women to contradict men. In the end, this supports and upholds an elitist political structure that is dominated by men.

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<sup>15</sup> Female respondents, Kimuka - Kajiado West, 23.03.2016

<sup>16</sup> Female respondent, Kimuka – Kajiado West, 23.03.2016

## **BREAKING BARRIERS**

While the findings above evidence more challenges than successes, the citizens are themselves aware of possible measures to rectify this. These include:

### **Investment in civic education in ways that involve citizens.**

With the men's readiness to volunteer as ambassadors within their communities on civic education, they noted the importance of government support. This is necessary as financial support to facilitate movement, and also resources such as expertise and texts to promote training of trainers in a system that would speed up the process and increase depth of outreach especially as the next general election draws nearer.

In order to deal with these problems and help women feel like part of society is that we the knowledgeable men...need to volunteer to teach whenever public meetings take place or during the women's merry-go-rounds since the government seems to have abandoned the grassroots. If the county government can facilitate this because facilitation might be problematic especially in reaching out to women in this vast area, it would go a long way in uplifting our women and our community in general.<sup>17</sup>

Most importantly, this partnership would have a positive influence on the relationship between citizens and government administration, as communication and support channels would be readily available to both parties.

### **The need for women to use their strength and numbers and be more proactive.**

A male respondent suggested that instead of there being a two thirds gender rule, a 50/50 approach is adopted instead. This he said, was to avoid a situation where women outnumber men in decision making and thereby oppress them. This clearly demonstrated awareness that women have the numbers and the capacity to assemble and assert influence. The same was echoed by male respondents who insisted that if women really wanted to, they would have power and influence in public and political processes, without waiting for men to hand them opportunities. If they really want the opportunities, they can have them.

There is something the Maasai say; *Metum erap etii enkuo entare* (you cannot find anything if you do not look for it) ...look for it. If you wait for a man to think of you, I will give you a primary school committee position, I will give you a position in the water committee, but if you wait for the positions with a lot of money, you won't get it as I will give it to a man. So look for the positions yourselves!<sup>18</sup>

This strength is however weakened by reported self-sabotage by the women, who sometimes opt for male authority over the superiority of one of their own.

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<sup>17</sup> Male respondent, Nairagie Enkare – Narok East, 201.04.2016

<sup>18</sup> Male respondent, Loitokitok – Kajiado South, 07.03.2016

What contributes mostly to women being left out is that some despise others; they look at them and ask who they think they are to stand and address us...Despising each other really contributes to women being left behind.<sup>19</sup>

While traditions and customs were often cited as reasons for continued male dominance in authority and decision making, one man made it clear that the same is used as an excuse to perpetuate male dominance and maintain the status quo. He pointed out that the community has over time adopted many changes that contradicted what was termed traditional, and they would too on gender equality, but are reluctant to get rid of male dictatorship.

### **An increased role for men as custodians of cultural norms.**

This has worked in combating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) whereby the involvement of men has led to increased success in the campaign. It is the men themselves who made suggestions of having male ambassadors at the community level, who could volunteer for civic education whenever an opportunity for public engagement presents itself.

This echoes sentiments by the women, that knowledge transmission on the importance of including women in governance processes should not be restricted to women alone, but should also include men so they can provide an opportunity for change starting at the home front;

Even men need the training. They are saying that 'women do not speak' so they also need the training so that when both are educated, he can give me the freedom. I am not saying it is all of them, but without the training, he will not understand me when I bring an agenda to the home. For us to understand each other, we both need the training.<sup>20</sup>

With this in place, men and women can approach roles as equals, recognising and respecting each other's rights to engage in political affairs. The ensuing support structure would minimise confrontations, while opening up the space for equity and equality.

### **Strengthening and re-thinking the Women Representative position.**

Respondents reported a lack of confidence in this position to properly represent the needs of women. To begin with, is the lack of a special fund focused on women, which makes it difficult to support specific women projects or the participation of grassroots women to public participation exercises. Secondly, they – though just in the first term and situations may change – were endorsed by the male elite. Chances of contradicting them in the pursuit of women agendas therefore becomes difficult. Lastly, the administrative areas are very big, limiting the breadth and depth of outreach by an individual. These representatives are out of reach for many women at whose service they ought to be.

### **Using community radio as an easier and more affordable avenue for civic education.**

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<sup>19</sup> Female respondent, Loitokitok – Kajiado South, 03.03.2016

<sup>20</sup> Female respondent, Nairagie Enkare – Narok East, 21.04.2016

This is especially so because community radios use the Maa language which is more understandable for a majority of citizens at the villages who are poor at English and Swahili, the national languages.

Another way is through the media, say the radio stations' broadcasts in the evenings when women have time. So if the stations are used to pass the information, it will create an avenue to effect change.<sup>21</sup>

Widespread information promotes rights awareness, increasing agency and necessitating government responsiveness to community needs and especially women's.

### **Legalising women groups**

Though not explored in the focus groups discussions, the legalisation of women groups could provide an alternative avenue for the incorporation of women's voices in governance. This approach has been successfully adopted in Peru, as reported by McNulty (2015). As an informal platform for participation, women groups as legally recognisable bodies could become the channels for agendas that could not, for whatever reason, be discussed in public forums, and those that were discussed but not incorporated but are of strong standing among the women. As Taeko (2014) asserts, the women groups are of great significance in the lives of the women, and in ways that benefit the community at large.

Women groups however provide a platform for improvement on this. Discussions with the respondents confirmed this, explaining that they have transformed their lives through the knowledge and assistance they get from their women groups. These spaces are not only used as meeting points to support group lending and organise the sale of their beadwork, but also for peer counselling and information sharing on public affairs. The women have therefore been able to learn more about community affairs and development needs, in addition to their culturally pre-determined mandate of domestic and financial management, and how to run micro and small businesses.

Things have totally changed today. There are village elders and among them are women. The women are now involved in community development and pass on all the necessary information to the women in the merry-go-round<sup>22</sup> groups.<sup>23</sup>

Legalising them would increase their legitimacy and provide a platform for training on political agency, and a channel for women to communicate their needs without fear of prejudice or disregard from their male counterparts. This navigation system will then present itself directly to planning boards, communicating matters that would otherwise remain unaired in the mainstream participation process.

### **CONCLUSION**

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<sup>21</sup> Male respondent, Nairagie Enkare – Narok East, 20.04.2016

<sup>22</sup> Women groups whereby members make deposits that are then given to individual members on a rotational basis.

<sup>23</sup> Female Respondent, Nairagie Enkare – Narok East, 19.04.2016

Participation and participatory governance are hailed for bringing the government closer to the people and promoting responsive policy making by the government (Crook, 2003). Its bottom-up approach, Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) highlight, aides in the definition of local priorities and more home grown solutions. Public participation allows for a governance structure guided by the creation and implementation of activities among citizens in conjunction with those in government. Together, the two entities formulate policies to meet a common goal, mainly home-grown and inclusive development. This process of citizen deliberation as a means or an end in itself, Bingham et al (2005) report, has been argued to improve democracy.

Cooke and Kothari (2001) however warn of the tyranny of participation, whereby public participation becomes a platform for the illegitimate use of power and the continued marginalisation of the very individuals for whose benefit the process is set up. This has been clearly demonstrated in the case herein. For actors in the process therefore, participation could end up being a confrontational process instead of the inclusive vision that it is, especially for communities governed by deeply-rooted discriminatory social norms.

Aware of this reality, this case focuses on a community whose female members opt for co-option instead of confrontation as a desired pathway to achieving gender equality. This option places men and women centrally in this quest, only minimally referring to formal laws for guidance. The influential power men have in making decisions and over practices in the community are very well acknowledged, with solutions centred on negotiating power relations as opposed to criminalising the non-observance of equality rights as the formal law system would dictate. This highlights a community cognisant of the rules governing power relations within it and even more aware and open to alternative engagement processes.

The case thus reiterates the argument for the need to balance desire for legitimacy and support for decisions in participatory policy planning (Rowe and Frewer, 2000). For communities such as the Maasai, socio-cultural norms outweigh formal laws and it is within them that change can be actualised. Disregard for these will do nothing to help in giving a voice to the marginalised women and improving their agency in the Kenyan public space.

Contextualised policy processes and openness to support for alternative processes pave the way for less confrontational and more transformative public participation systems. In the case of the Maasais, the inequality awareness and readiness for dialogue on inclusivity provide an excellent platform for the exploration of alternative approaches to gender equality.

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# **Poverty and Dependency Culture: Economic Independence of Women in Bolinao**

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**Abstract:** Government and non-governmental organizations developed measures that could help alleviate poverty. However, most programs or policies created fail due to lack of continuity, control from the responsible units and lack of cooperation as well as enthusiasm from the beneficiaries. One of the major problems when it comes to community-based development programs is the dislike of women to get involved in livelihood and educational programs. It creates a barrier for development and growth. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between poverty and the dependency culture theory. This is a participatory research with the emphasis is on the individual's preference when it comes to economic independence. By incorporating science and practice, and understanding the relationship between poverty and dependency theory, this paper can provide strategies in order to approach the selected beneficiaries with problems understanding and accepting sustainable community development programs efficiently and effectively.

**Keywords:** Government, Non-Governmental Organizations, Poverty, Dependency Culture, Economic Independence, Sustainability, Development Programs

## **Redefining HEALTHY for Leadership's Sake**

*Dr. Angela M. Shuttlesworth discusses her method of effective leadership with a personal moniker she developed for her business and global project, Healthy Villages, LLC.*

I am a social worker by training and most of all, at heart. I started this journey on a prayer call with my heart at the core of my pain due to police brutality committed against African Americans. I asked for Pastor Miriam Niles to pray for more leaders and what I interpreted from her response was, "No, we live in a world of abundance. We don't need more leaders, we need leaders to actually stand and walk in their power."

That conversation was one of the experiences that propelled me to start a business as homage to my abilities and a personal choice to create my own freedom. My business coach recommended that I merge my passion and love of research, community, healing and leadership and thus Healthy Villages, LLC was born. My goal is to heal the world one strategy at a time, which I have begun by facilitating the creation of HEALTHY workplaces and organizations. In my quest to define things on my own terms, I developed a model using H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. as an acronym. Today, I will use this model as a guide to discuss HEALTHY leadership as an essential tool for progress:

### **‘H’ is to Honor Everyone's Journey.**

Oftentimes, we want to hear what someone says, and we may even listen to certain things as we seek understanding. However, to honor someone's journey is to actually place yourself in their experience and seek to find a level of empathy. In that, we seek to know and understand where they are coming from, where they are going to and what they have had to go through. Thereafter we apply all of that to how they are showing up in a particular moment.

Connection often comes with judgment on the part of the listener and shame for the person who has shared. Neither are productive and only hinder our ability to connect and engage in a way that adds to our collective growth. As a leader it's our duty to ensure that we are seeking "better," and those that are connected to us are on a path to "better" as well.

In speaking of making our lives and the world around us "better," I then began to think about quality. Considering how we had become a world that was accepting of and even celebrating mediocrity I wanted to push our envelope of expectation.

**‘E’ is to Establish Excellence as Your Norm.**

We must discover a deeper understanding about our “best”, how our best shifts at different times and ultimately respecting that as truth. But we must also approach our work from the standpoint of excellence by giving our best, whatever it may be, at all times. We have to show up and be willing to commit, not just for others but more so for ourselves. We feel better when we show up and are allowed to show out as our best selves. When I walk away from a task, I want to know that I did it with all I had to give.

**‘A’ is to Advance the Culture with Innovation.**

During turbulent times you are blessed with an opportunity to truly assess the reality of what exists. Within that assessment, we must acknowledge the behaviors, norms and sometimes ugly truths and see it as a form of culture. By acknowledging it as such it gives us an opportunity to couple it with our strengths, abilities and power to truly move forward.

While moving forward we are able to fill the gaps of what was possibly missing. For some people it’s the simple fact that they’ve never been exposed to love and or safety. For others it’s much more complex. Whichever the case, we have to do so utilizing our creative genius, and thanks to technology it makes innovation and fulfilling individual needs much easier. By meeting individual needs we ultimately achieve collective success, and advance the culture in a new way.

**‘L’ is to Lead with vulnerability and joy.**

Leadership oftentimes comes off in an abrasive way, with the individual proclaiming, "I'm here to give demands," from a dictatorial standpoint. However, in reality leadership is about reaching a point where the leader can be vulnerable and acknowledge the lessons learned from their mistakes. In past and current leadership roles, I have and will continue to allow my team to know that it's okay to fall. In our ‘not falling alone’, we can get to the next space of opportunity and “better” together. We can learn from the obstacles that previously held us back and the strategies that helped us to move forward.

Per Brene Brown, "You share with those who've earned the right" to experience your vulnerability. But what if you feel that someone really needs the lessons resulting from your “vulnerability story,” even if they may not deserve it? In accepting delayed gratification, we can expose our vulnerability gradually, so that by the end of the interaction the other person will have hopefully earned it.

And it should be *fun* to lead. I always say, if you are not a passionate leader, you don't need to be a leader. That’s something I had to learn over time. The more staff I acquired, the more I had to work beyond my expertise, which created an opportunity of vulnerability. Noticing this, my teammates

made sure to provide for me in meaningful ways beyond their job descriptions. After receiving a promotion I was granted the new corner office, and I didn't want to move. I was comfortable in my little office. I showed up to work one day, and they had “evicted” me from my old office as my transition was also a sign of their progress as well. I found more joy in them promoting me than I did from the piece of paper identifying my new title. Joy allowed me connect to my staff alongside their dreams. Aligning their vision to their work mattered to me, and they never questioned it.

**‘T’ is to Thrive with Efficiency and Passion.**

With all of the activity going on in our lives, we are constantly multi-tasking and trying to find ways to get “it” done. However, as it relates to doing the work that is aligned to our passion and purpose we spend a lot time talking about ideas and little time bringing them to fruition. When we respect the power of our “work” and time we should fulfill our goals with a sense of urgency. With that said, I like to believe that if you're passionate about something, no one will stop you from making sure that it comes to fruition as your life is tied to it.

My favorite movie is *The Life of David Gale*. In one scene he asks, "What are you willing to die for?" Oftentimes, most people aren't willing to die. Most will dance with the idea of a particular cause that they're married to in the moment, as long as it's convenient. As long as it gives them some more status. But considering that question has gotten me to think about what I am willing to die for in order to give my life meaning while I *am* alive. It's not about surviving, but making a choice to thrive with efficiency and passion.

**‘H’ is Hearing with the Intention to Act.**

Businesses often have a Q & A box that says, “We want your feedback.” As a customer, I wondered if they *really* wanted to hear *and* listen to my experience, to do something about it.

In HEALTHY Leadership, you have to listen with the intention of considering resources that you will need to support someone's goals and address their concerns before they ever provide a response. Those who are following us can hear our intentions through our words, and most of all they see it in our actions. We have to apply this in response to their verbal and non-verbal responses as it is necessary for long-term connection and impact.

**‘Y’ is to Yield for the Awesomeness of You.**

We rarely pause for the cause of the individual. A good leader generally thinks about everybody else. However, we need to also ensure that we're taking care of ourselves. We must also extend this sense of self-care to those who we are leading. They must feel that they too are okay; that they are in alignment; that their visions and missions are being fulfilled.

Using this model, let's make a choice to shift the mere definition of leadership to include that which will create collective progress. That is my prescription for leading and living in a HEALTHY way.

**Dr. Angela M. Shuttlesworth**

Dr. Angela M. Shuttlesworth (DrAMS) is a leadership and engagement strategist, macro level healer and the founder of Healthy Villages. Her company is dedicated to helping leaders accomplish their BIG Goal, their bridge to their irrefutable greatness.

# **Resilience of Emirati Student Mothers in Higher Education**

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## **Abstract**

Women's entry into higher education has consistently increased over the past two decades (UNESCO, 2009) and is considered essential and necessary for the construction of a new society (Ayad al-Qazzat, 2003). A large proportion of female university students in the UAE are mothers of young children, or become mothers whilst at university. The purpose of the study was to gain insight on student mothers' experiences post childbirth while they were in the Bachelor of Education Program. The design of the study was a mixed method approach that included individual interview data from thirty mothers, and survey data from over sixty student mothers. The main findings indicated that mothers have strong desires for their institution to support them more, for example by the provision of nursery facilities and resting areas for new mothers, and giving them greater flexibility over course selections and schedules including the provision of online learning. The major challenges which they identified in returning to college after only two weeks of maternity leave included the inevitable health and lack of sleep issues when caring for a newborn, struggling to catch up with missed college work and handling their course load, limited support. The study also explored the women's home support systems which were provided from a variety of extended family, spouses and paid domestic help. Emirati student mothers in this study demonstrated a commitment to the educational process, a desire to make a valuable contribution to their families, the college community and to the nation. They have valuable knowledge and experiences to contribute and are an asset to the college and community. Higher education institutions also need to be mindful that not supporting these student mothers may ultimately lead to high rates of attrition in their predominantly female student body. Therefore, teacher education programs need to be proactive in meeting the needs of student mothers and appreciate their self-efficacy and resilience.

# **Safe sleep space alternative for Aboriginal families in Australia –**

## **A strengths based community approach to research**

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### **Abstract**

This pilot study aims to collaboratively explore of the use of a culturally safe sleep alternative, the Pēpi-pod, as an option for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in a central metropolitan region in Adelaide.

The study is a joint project between the Women's and Children's Health Network, Flinders University and the SA Department for Health and Ageing. The study will assess the cultural safety of the Pēpi-pod Program and the ability to embed the program into existing models of care in the Adelaide metropolitan context. The pilot involves existing Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Care (AMIC) workers, Aboriginal Cultural Consultants (ACCs) and Maternal, Child and Family Health Nurses (CaFHN) and provides a unique opportunity to strengthen partnerships between these individuals and organisations, and Aboriginal families in the community.

The pilot will recruit 10 families who will be provided with safe sleep education and Pēpi-pod in the antenatal period with joint education from the ACC and AMIC workers. Families will receive regular follow-up postnatally and be asked to take photographs of their Pēpi-pod use and other sleep arrangements. The research team will interview families at pre and post intervals to yarn about their photos and perceptions of the safe sleep education and Pēpi-pods. Focus group data will also be collected from all health and care professionals and a community advisory group established within the research project. The results will assist our understanding of whether the Pēpi-pod program is a culturally safe approach for Aboriginal families living in South Australia.

**Keywords**—Indigenous families, Australian Aboriginal, maternal infant care, community research, empowerment, strength.

## I. INTRODUCTION

When implementing health promotion strategies with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families it is essential that strategies are evidence informed and the implementation is undertaken collaboratively. The core focus of collaboration is to ascertain the cultural appropriateness of the proposed intervention with the population group before amended (or suspended) large-scale implementation. Given the significance of research collaboration, this paper presents a research protocol for a trial implementation of the Pēpi-pod program as a safe sleep alternative for metropolitan Adelaide Aboriginal families. This protocol is methodologically significant and innovative as it is underpinned by a shared approach between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, industry, service partners and researchers in implementing a tangible strategy for health promotion and social change. The experiences of participant families, community, and industry representatives will inform development of a larger statewide study.

The idea for the study arose from the CaFHS response to the coroner's recommendation regarding safe sleep in 2015, where during the consultation process it was raised by the ACC team that co-sleeping is a cultural practice and that a safe alternative needs to be considered. ACCs working in CaFHS identified the Pēpi-pod Program from New Zealand as a potentially culturally acceptable way to enhance the safety of Aboriginal infants during sleep. Importantly, this program includes relationship-based family education in addition to provision of a robust plastic 'pod'. The later provides infants with their own safe sleep surface, which can be placed on the parent/caregiver's bed during sleep. A working group was established with representatives from CaFHS, the Women and Children's Health Network (WCHN), SA Health Public Health Services, Kidsafe SA, Aboriginal Health Council SA, and SIDS and Kids SA. The use of portable sleep spaces to reduce the risk of SUDI for families with identified risk factors has been previously reported in New Zealand and more recently in Australia (Cowan 2015; Tiaki 2014; Young et al. 2013; Young 2014; Watson et al. 2014; Mitchell 2014). The process and evolution of this study is an example of how we can be innovative in providing culturally responsive services to Aboriginal families.

The joint project collaboration obtained a grant to fund the project and ethics approval has been granted. The pilot involves recruitment of 10 families who will be provided with a Pēpi-pod in the antenatal period with education jointly from the ACC and AMIC workers, which is an opportunity to strengthen the partnership between the AMIC and ACC workers. Families will receive regularly follow up postnatally and will be asked to take photos of their Pēpi-pod in use. The research team will also interview them in order to explore their use of the Pēpi-pod and whether it is a culturally appropriate alternative. Recruitment of families will commence in February 2017.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants are over-represented in sudden and unexpected infant death (SUDI) rates (ABS, 2011) with up to four times the rate of non-Indigenous infants (QFCC, 2014). In South Australia between 2005 and 2013 there were 29 deaths of Aboriginal infants where unsafe sleeping environments were noted (Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee, 2014). While many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families currently use a range of safe options such as cots, many families face cultural and economic barriers to accessing these options. With this the objectives of this project are to:

1. Collaboratively explore a culturally appropriate safe sleep space alternative for Aboriginal families in South Australia.
2. Collaboratively explore the process of implementing a culturally appropriate safe sleep space alternative for Aboriginal families in South Australia
3. Determine strategies to embed culturally appropriate health promotion strategies into the safe sleep initiative
4. Enable the process and outcomes of the initiative to be as culturally safe as possible for Aboriginal families

Of practice significance this research will trial an innovative strategy that aims to reduce Indigenous infant mortality by combining practical real-time support with a health promotion intervention. It will explore use of the Pēpi-pod, using existing community networks accessed by Indigenous families in central metropolitan Adelaide. The findings will be significant for National and SA Government Policy, informing and underpinning strategies that will improve the SA Safe Infant Sleeping Standards best practice indicators (SA Health 2011, p. 15). These indicators currently do not recommend co-sleeping or accommodate culturally safe practices for Aboriginal families leaving individuals, families and health professionals without best practice alternatives. The findings will enable policy makers to see sleeping practices and a safe sleep alternative from the standpoint of Aboriginal families. With a more complete understanding of human experiences, policy-makers can make better decisions about public policy that are fairer and that can improve the lives of Aboriginal peoples. Early and respectful engagement leads to better outcomes (Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Policy Directive 2014, p. 5). With a potential to improve many aspects of service delivery to all people, the Health Impact Statement Policy Directive aims to ensure that Aboriginal stakeholders and community members have been engaged in the decisions that affect their health and wellbeing. Such a culturally respectful engagement will ensure optimally attention to Aboriginal health disparities in SA (2014, p. 4).

This project is methodologically significant and innovative as it takes a collaborative approach between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, industry, service partners and researchers in implementing a tangible strategy for health promotion and social change. The experiences of participant families, community, and industry representatives will inform development of a larger state-wide study.

## II. BACKGROUND

Late in 2014 the Coroner handed down findings relating to an infant death and made recommendations that had implications for Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS) (Coroner's Court of SA 2014, p. 34). A safe sleep response was developed and approved by the Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN) Chief Executive Officer. One of the recommendations of the Coroner was to develop a risk assessment form to assess and observe the infant sleep environment as part of CaFHS home visits. A 'Sleeping Baby Safely form' consultation occurred with CaFHS staff and consumers with the form also being trialed at some Universal Contact Visits.

Feedback from Aboriginal Cultural Consultants and Nurses identified that for many Aboriginal families there were issues regarding the provision of a safe sleep space for their infants. The two main factors were that the family did not have appropriate equipment to provide a safe sleep space for their infant and/or that the cultural practice of sleeping the infant in the parent/caregivers bed was common. Bed-sharing and co-sleeping are argued to be valued infant care practices in Australia (Australian College of

Midwives 2014), and the cultural norm in many Indigenous communities (Young et al. 2013). Infant deaths are associated with co-sleeping where there are additional complex and hazardous circumstances (Mitchell & Blair 2012; Mitchell 2014). Despite this, there is no provision for co-sleeping for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the WCHN safe sleep guidelines.

There is a clear indication of disparity in health outcomes for Indigenous Australians (ABS 2005; Marmot 2011; Francis 2012; Jorm et al. 2012; Shepherd, Li & Zubric 2012). The risk of sudden unexpected death in infancy is similarly disparate. There are around 700 hundred Aboriginal babies born in South Australia per annum (SA Health, 2013). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants are over-represented in sudden and unexpected infant death (SUDI) rates (ABS, 2011) with up to four times the rate of non-Indigenous infants (QFCC, 2014). In South Australia between 2005 and 2013 there were 29 deaths of Aboriginal infants where unsafe sleeping environments were noted (Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee, 2014).

The risks of SUDI for Aboriginal infants are linked to the higher mortality rates, the socio-economic disadvantages, overcrowding, the higher rates of low birth weight, abuse, alcohol and substance abuse, smoking and co-sleeping (Mitchell et al 2011). A scientific consensus forum that reviewed the evidence underpinning the Australian SIDS and Kids Safe Sleeping Health Promotion Program recommended that intervention programs for Aboriginal families need to be adapted to the needs of local communities and develop culturally appropriate resources and training for the prevention of SUDI (Mitchell et al, 2011).

In response to these issues a small working party identified the Pēpi-pod Program in New Zealand as a culturally safe option that could possibly meet the needs of parents, community and industry. The use of portable sleep spaces to reduce the risk of SUDI for families with identified risk factors has been previously reported in New Zealand and more recently in Australia (Cowan 2015; Tiaki 2014; Young et al. 2013; Young 2014; Watson et al. 2014; Mitchell 2014), and in other parts of the world, such as Finland (Lee 2013; Zimmerman 2014). Indigenous communities have identified this area as a priority for investigation (Dodd 2012).

The Pēpi-pod Program was initially introduced in New Zealand in 2011 following the Christchurch earthquakes and was rolled out to 13 regions within 2014 to around 4000 families. The Pēpi-pods were provided to more vulnerable families along with education about safe sleep practices (Change for our Children, 2015). The Pēpi-pod Programme (Cowan 2015) comprises three interlinked components:

1. Safe Space: a polypropylene box transformed into an infant bed through addition of a fabric cover, mattress and bedding;
2. Safe Care: parent education and safety briefing; (antenatal visit, in last 6 weeks)
3. Role of family: families share what they learn about safe infant sleeping.

A review of the program found that the majority of families (74%) accepted the Pod and 83% were using them at 8 weeks, 57% at 12 weeks and 30% still using them at 16 weeks. Parents reported they liked its support of: safety, convenience and settling. Infant mortality fell significantly during the intervention period from 2.4 per 1000 in 2011 to 1.9 in 2014 and 4.5 to 3.5 for Maori infants (Change for our Children, 2015).

Use of the Pēpi-pod is currently being trialed in Australia across seven Cape York

communities in Queensland as a preventive health initiative for safer sleep environments. Program Leader and Chair of the SIDS and Kids National Scientific Advisory Group Professor Jeanine Young states that ‘many Indigenous families prefer to co-sleep to ease breastfeeding and stay as close as they can to their baby – the Pēpi-pods enable families to maintain this practice and keep baby safe’ (Apunipima Cape York Health Council 2013). What puts this pilot project apart is multipronged; that it explores the perceptions of the users – do they find the pods culturally appropriate, and most importantly the project findings has identified a new model of care around ante- and postnatal care for Aboriginal families, mothers and babies in South Australia.

### III. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this qualitative pilot study we will collaboratively research the suitability of Pēpi-pods as a culturally appropriate and safe sleep space with 10 Aboriginal families in metropolitan Adelaide. Participatory case study is used as it involves ‘participants, local groups, or the community in all phases of the research process, from conceptualizing the study to writing up and disseminating the findings’ (Reilly 2010). This collaboration has already commenced with the establishment of the working group, which will continue through the life of the project as a Research Advisory Group (RAG). Case Study investigates phenomenon within ‘real-life context’ (Yin 1994 p.13) that includes real life situations. Real life in this study will be constituted firstly by the broad community of interested Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders being established as a Community Advisory Group (CAG). This will be followed by 10 self-selecting pregnant mothers forming the hub of cases bounded by their extended family and community and the health workers engaged in their care. As such this Case Study design resembles Yin’s (1994) Single Case Holistic Design. It is holistic in that it encompasses views from several families and the community. There is one unit of analysis i.e. the views of the CAG, families and parents engaging in the Pēpi-pod Program.

Through discussions with the working group we propose that the exploration of the Pēpi-pod program for Aboriginal families can be integrated into the existing health promotion program delivered by Aboriginal Maternal Infant Care (AMIC) workers in the antenatal and postnatal infant stages. This simultaneously provides AMIC workers with continuous quality improvement via a ‘plan-do-study-act’ plan for interaction with the local Aboriginal families.

Case study data will be collected through photovoice, where researchers ask participants to use photographs to document aspects of their lives and experiences (Wang & Burris 1997). This method is ideal for community-based research as participants can be actively involved in all parts of the research process. Participants will be asked to describe the content and meanings of the photos they have taken during in-depth interviews. The interview process will explore the participants’ individual and collective experiences to the Pēpi-pod program (Booth & Booth 2003, p. 431). In keeping with the three main objectives of this method, photovoice will enable community members to identify and record their strengths and struggles explain their experiences through critical reflection and dialogue; and inform decision-makers and influence policy (Wang and Burris 1997, p. 369).

Where past research involving Indigenous Peoples may have been criticised as inherently biased and disempowering, recent research focuses on partnerships, positive change, and who will benefit from the findings (Putt 2013). Participatory research based in community is a way to build partnerships between Indigenous communities, research institutions and governments and to increase Indigenous community participation and control in research (Edwards, Lund, Mitchell and Anderson 2008). The establishment of

the CAG will facilitate the voice of community and may include elders, community members and those who have an understanding and expertise in the areas related to the research. A cultural broker will be employed to assist with establishing this CAG. The cultural broker has an understanding of the world views and cultural values, beliefs and practices of all parties and the person will have contact with both the researchers, the AMIC workers and the participant group or community throughout the research process.

Knowledge transfer activities will be coordinated through the Aboriginal Research Liaison Officer (ARLO), the CAG and the RAG with the aim of translating expertise and findings between academia and the non-academic community. It is well recognised by government and funders as an important return to community of investment and participation of academic research (Hewitt-Dundas 2012).

#### IV. DATA COLLECTION

Covering objectives 1, 3 & 4;

- 2 focus groups with a CAG (Community Advisory Group) comprising Indigenous Peoples from Kaurna lands involved with community groups such as Nunkawarrin Yunti, Aboriginal play groups, Aboriginal children's centers and Mothers and Babies groups
- 2 focus groups with health workers and cultural consultants, such as Aboriginal Maternal Infant Care (AMIC) workers, working with families in the perinatal period within the agency and with health workers from other relevant agencies

Covering objective 1 & 2;

- 3 in-depth interviews prompted by photovoice elicitation with 10 mothers with new born babies from the CaFHS Adelaide Metropolitan Central region where AMIC workers are already in place. These will take place around the time of the baby being 2, 8 & 16 weeks of age

Families will be recruited into the program through AMIC workers during an antenatal check, in last 6 weeks prior to confinement. The AMIC workers are a trusted source of information and will ensure that the information is offered in a non-coercive and culturally appropriate manner. Participants will be purposively selected from the Indigenous antenatal & maternity care services in metropolitan Adelaide, South Australia. In addition eligible participants will be identified by the presence of one or more known SUDI risk factors noted by Young et al (2013); maternal smoking, during pregnancy and/or post-natal; intention to bed-share (regularly/irregularly); recent drug use, including prescribed medications that may affect consciousness; alcohol use; pre-term birth ( $\leq 36$  weeks); low-birth weight ( $< 2500$  grams). These risk factors are routinely assessed by the AMIC workers so will not require additional questioning for recruitment.

Follow up with the families provided with a Pēpi-pod will occur at 2, 8, and 16 weeks and will include exploring their use of the Pod, their experience of using the Pod and their understanding of safe sleep. Parent interviews and questionnaires will be administered face-to-face by a researcher in collaboration with the ARLO to ensure the research is experienced as culturally safe. Sample questions include parents knowledge of SUDI risk factors and strategies to enhance safety, circumstances of pod utilisation, usual baby care 'yesterday' and 'last night', infant care enhanced by pod use, and limitations/adverse events associated with pod.

## V. COMING TOGETHER

A training session was held for staff including Aboriginal Cultural Consultants (ACC), Aboriginal Maternal Infant Care (AMIC) workers, some nurses and midwives who will be involved in a pilot study- ‘Safe Sleep Space Alternative for Aboriginal Families- Pēpi-pod’. The training had a positive energy and participants had the opportunity to share their stories of Aboriginal sleep practices and to contribute to how the pilot will be commenced. The contributions and willingness of everyone involved in the training on the day was invaluable.



## VI. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Early in the project a change to existing practice is evident. Based on discourse with health care professionals involved in the maternal and infant care, a new model of care is emerging with the alignment of AMIC and ACC services. This project has brought about change by adding improved communication between AMIC and ACC services, putting joint visits and also 2 more visits than previously on the agenda, see process overview.

## VII. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

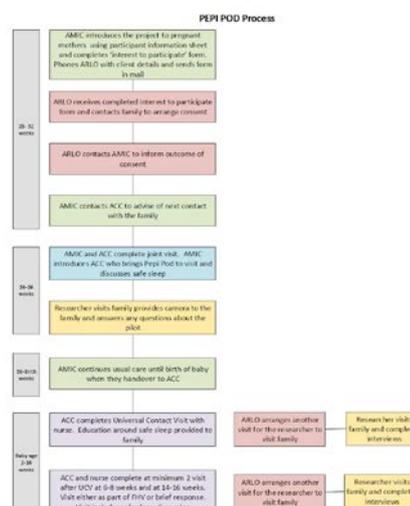
This conference has contributed to women's leadership by bringing together Knowledge holders from across the world to share of our experiences and insights. Women are often under-represented in leadership roles. However, as we have heard here today, Aboriginal and other women have diverse knowledge, experience, perspectives and connections that can enhance program planning, decision-making and organizational governance. Further to that, Aboriginal women are important role models in their community, particularly for girls and young women, hence sharing our stories may contribute to pathways for future women Aboriginal leaders.

*In uniting with our history, we become simultaneously connected with our power, our possibilities, and with the uniqueness and importance of our vision, this new appreciation allows us to say of the more limited view that society has of women [and of nurses and midwives]: we will not bow down to it no longer. (Ruth Abrams, origin unknown)*

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**Nina Sivertsen** is an international Indigenous nurse and lecturer within the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Flinders University, Adelaide. She is a Sea-Sámi from Northern Norway, a mother, a researcher, a knowledge seeker and keeper straddling life in the Indigenous and academic worlds.

Her inter-Indigenous research is internationally acknowledged with both national and international collaborative partnerships. Her work is the recipient of many awards and focuses on women's empowerment and leadership, in particular within Indigenous health. With her PhD about Indigenous identity and Indigenous midwifery in a sociopolitical context - a historical biography about a travelling midwife from the arctic wilderness - she aims to contribute to the growing literature of Indigenous research by Indigenous researchers in a global context.

She is also an avid researcher in the field of innovative uses of simulation strategies within nursing education, aiming to improve student experiences and also ultimately patient outcomes.

She is an active member of many academic committees providing space for Indigenous voices within strategic planning, governance, curriculum and admissions. Her research interests include teaching in tertiary settings, assessing and teaching cultural safety of future health professionals as well as exploring Indigenous health, women's identity and culture.

# **Social enterprise for the women, by the women, to generate opportunity and create awareness about decreasing child sex ratio in India**

**Smita Gyan**

Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, Japan / Shanvats Foods Private Limited, India

## **ABSTRACT**

Nature created male Sex and female sex, for sustainability. Male and female were supposed to be complementing each other to sustain the Mother Nature. But over the time the phenomenon of complementarity converted in to competition and male and female started competing with each other. Male having physically dominant characteristics started seeing itself as the superior sex. Society played greater role in creating new term “Gender” and biological term “Sex” started getting replaced with it. In India, males are considered as natural heir although law gives equal rights to both men and women. Hence, women herself discriminates between her own children. More often gender-biased abortion is also done to assure male child. This practice is common across the country including urban India. Such a practice leads to imbalance in sex ratio. To create awareness about declining sex ratio and its severe impact on society, we have started an enterprise for women in areas where due to poor resources women have not been able to get exposure. Many a times it happens that women are bound to follow what she has been fed throughout her life in deficiency of proper exposure and awareness. So such enterprises becomes a medium for income generation as well as source of awareness and exposure. Which can thus help in spreading the message carrying importance of bridging the gender gap.

Once the seed of awareness is sown it is quite probable that women will stand for her rights and will not discriminate between her own children based on gender. Change is bound to happen although it will not come in a day or year, but once the seed is sown we can nourish it to an extent where the seed will become a tree and we can reap fruit of change. A new Society, A better Society where Sex will be “Male” and “Female” as defined by nature, complementing each other, for the sustainability and beauty of Mother Nature.

**Keywords: Gender Equality, Sex Ratio, Sustainability, Awareness, Social Enterprise.**

## **The benefits and barriers to iron-deficiency anemia education among *Jenu Kuruba* adolescent girls**

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## Abstract

**Background:** In India, women and girls are burdened with high rates of iron deficiency anemia (IDA) and face many obstacles that limit their ability to seek iron-rich food. Education is an effective tool that empowers girls to seek better nutrition, however, reduced access to sufficient resources along with other barriers often prevents them from improving their health status.

**Objective:** The current study used an education-based intervention that evaluated adolescent girls' change in knowledge about anemia. In addition, this study examined if the presentation influenced girls to seek iron-rich foods and explored the barriers that prevented them from doing so. Finally, girls were taught leadership skills by asking them to share the knowledge they learned from the presentation with their peers and family members.

**Methods:** The study was conducted among the *Jenu Kuruba* tribe in Mysore District, Karnataka. At time 1 (T1), participants completed a pre-test questionnaire that assessed their knowledge of anemia, and were then shown a presentation. One week later at time 2 (T2), participants were asked to report their knowledge of anemia, if they increased consumption of iron-rich foods, and to state the barriers that prevented them from consuming these items. Girls were also asked to report to whom they shared their knowledge of anemia. Finally, participants provided a finger-prick of blood to assess their hemoglobin levels.

**Results:** A total of 28 girls completed all study protocols. Average age was 15.36 (range: 15-17), and average education level was 9.64 (range: 7-12). The majority of girls had hemoglobin levels below normal (n=18; 64%). At T1, 22 girls (85%) did not know what anemia was, compared to only six who did not know at T2 (21%;  $X^2=12.13$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

Knowledge of anemia symptoms from T1 to T2 also increased, with 20 girls (71%) from T1 reporting that they did not know symptoms of anemia, compared to only two at T2 (7%;  $X^2=23.21$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). At T2, girls also identified more iron-rich foods than at T1. All stated that they were able to increase consumption of iron-rich foods, but mentioned several barriers to access such items. Financial stress was the main reason girls could not consume a variety of iron-rich foods. Girls also mentioned that parents' lack of interest and the unavailability of certain foods prevented them from increasing iron in their diet. Finally, nearly all participants (96%) reported that they shared the information they learned with peers and family members.

**Conclusion:** Findings from this study show that nutrition education was an effective means to increase girls' knowledge of IDA and increase self-reported consumption of iron-rich foods. Girls were also motivated to teach peers and family members about the importance of consuming a healthy iron-rich diet. Future research will investigate the sociocultural and environmental factors that contribute to higher rates of IDA in this region in order to develop an appropriate intervention to improve health and feelings of empowerment among adolescent girls.

**Keywords:** adolescent girls, iron deficiency anemia, health education, barriers, change in knowledge

# **The Stigma and Coping Strategies of Divorced Women in Korea**

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## **Abstract**

### **Background**

This study has explored the stigma and coping strategies of divorced women in Korea. Korea, one of the fastest growing countries in the world today, has initiated and carried out successful economic development since the 1960's. With Korea's recent economic development achievements, one would think that Korean people have promoted their awareness about discrimination against women, however, according to the World Public Opinion on Widow's Day in 2008, which is American Survey Research Organization, 82% of participants from Korea believed that divorced women have been discriminated against. Korea ranked the highest among all of the 17 surveying countries.

In addition, as "the feminization of poverty" applies to Korean society, many divorced women are poor. Domestic studies that have recognized this tendency have only described the livelihoods of divorced women and the difficulties of raising children and have proposed livelihood costs and childcare support as a solution. However, the suffering of divorced women can be caused by social undervaluation and opportunity blocking through the interaction of people around the divorced women. By interviewing divorced women, this study identifies the coping strategies by looking at the stigma and stigma of the divorced women as stress processes.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study sought to examine the experience of divorced women from the standpoint of recognition. In the post-modernist society, Nancy Fraser(2008) presented "Recognition Discourse" for understanding the diverse identities and differences of individuals. Nancy Fraser explained that social injustice separated socio-economic injustice and cultural injustice. She argued that the former solution is redistribution and the latter one is recognition. This study from Nancy Fraser's view assumes that the causes and results of socio-economic injustice are "STIGMA", which are cultural injustice. This study employed the stigma theory from Link & Phelan(2001) who see stigma as sociopolitical view rather than a psychological view and the coping theory from Lazarus & Folkman(1984) who see stress("STIGMA" in this report) as process rather than stimulus.

### **Methods**

This study will conduct 15 semi-structured interviews with divorced women for an hour and a half for each interview. During interviews, the researcher will take notes on participant's situations and participant's comments in detail. The participants have lived in a medium-sized city in Korea. This city still holds the Korean Confucianism and patriarchy tradition in comparison with Seoul, the Korean Capital, where many people are influenced in thought by other countries. This study selected this area since a more detailed view of the traditional Korean thought about divorced

women can be examined. The data will be coded thematically using 'Emic coding & Etic coding' by Saldaña, J.(2009).

### **Anticipated Results**

There will be two expected outcomes of the data. First, according to the stigma theoretical classification of Stigma's Link & Phelan (2001), the topics will appear as follows: 1) On Distributing and Labeling Difference, 2) On Associating Labeling Differences with Negative Attributes, 3) Identifying "us" from "them" On Separating "US" from "Them", 4) Status Loss and Discrimination.

Second, the concept of coping will be based on the theoretical classification of stress coping by Lazarus & Folkman(1984): 1) Problem-focused coping which solved problems directly, 2) Emotion- focused coping which adjust people's mind about problems.

### **Implication for Social Work and Social Development Practice**

The findings highlight the importance of cultural intervention for divorced women's socio-economic status. Especially, it is suggested that social welfare intervention is needed for socially undervalued divorced women rather than existing income / livelihood security. Also, this study stresses the necessity to develop leadership and empowerment strategies through socio-economic discourse about the current coping strategies of divorced women.

# **The Toughened Glass Ceiling: The Invisible Woman Director in Indian SMEs – A Field Study**

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The Small and Medium Scale industry environment in India sees an overwhelming presence of the male members of the society, not only in the workforce but also at managerial levels. Being patriarchal in nature, the Indian social system does not encourage the presence of women in the professional arena. In addition, these organisations are usually family-run businesses that have been set up by the male heads of the family, which are then passed on to their male progeny to run. In this scenario, the presence of female CXOs and Directors of organisations is all but invisible. This paper presents part of an on-going research to highlight the manner in which the presence of women at executive positions is an extreme rarity. It studies the arduous and fraught with difficulty ascent of one of the few women Directors found on the field during our research. It also highlights the way in which she is able to positively contribute to the organisation, in spite of all the hardship, bolster growth and expansion, and make a mark for herself in the process. This paper presents the findings from a multi-organisational study conducted in the family-owned manufacturing units in Madhya Pradesh India, focusing on one organisation and their Woman Director. It attempts to demonstrate the existence of a fortified glass ceiling in these organisations and the manner in which women have begun to challenge it.

Keywords: Glass Ceiling, Women Executives, SMEs, Family-owned Businesses, Women Directors

## **Train Your Head... Body Will Follow**

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Weston Fitness

“Train Your Head, Body Will Follow” takes complicated subjects about the brain and body and breaks it down. By fusing her expertise on kinesiology and positive psychology, she has created a system, which helps her audience cultivate awareness and personal motivation through power statements.

The formula was created in collaboration with Professors from Temple University’s Kinesiology Department, and The University of Pennsylvania’s Positive Psychology Department to address the way the mind and body function both separately and together. The components of the presentation, such as the creating power statements, and tracking personal progress are designed to take between 1-3 minutes per day, making it possible for anyone to adapt to this method of positive thinking. In the same way physical therapy patients’ work on moving certain muscles, they are working to train their brain on reconnecting the association to these muscles, as well.

This system is designed not to over-complicate things, but present these ideas in a manner that appeal to our innate craving for action. We are training our brain to create action plans through affirmations and cultivating positive habits.

Keywords: Mind-Body, habits, goal setting, positivity

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