



## **FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN CAREER ADVANCEMENT: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The role of women in the world of work and the issue of whether women are making sufficient progress in advancing through the organizational rank has been debated several times all over the world. Research on women issues in organizations has often concentrated on comparing gender equality in terms of women's advancement, compensation and Leadership roles <sup>(1)</sup>. Therefore this article makes an attempt to review the literature from the existing researchers on Women career advancement to present the factors affecting women career advancement in workplace. A structured literature review is carried out to identify the factors affecting women career advancement. Finally, identified factors have been summarized to explain the current state of the concept.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Career advancement, Literature review, Women, Factors*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Career advancement among the women has become a challenging task all over the world. The unequal situation of women in contrast to men is as old as civilization <sup>(2)</sup>. Earlier, women have been engaged in economically productive jobs such as producing goods and services to their family, producing goods and services in their homes for outside sales and doing jobs outside the home for daily pay. Later, due to industrialization women started to seek for paid employment outside. The participation of women in all levels of management, and industries has gradually increased over the last few decades. Foreign investors are very much interested in investing the companies which give more preference for women career advancement <sup>(3)</sup> where human capital is considered as an intangible asset as a part good stakeholder relations

of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) <sup>(4)</sup>. Women keep on facing lot of hindrances to their career advancement including gender discrimination <sup>(5)</sup> <sup>(6)</sup>, gender stereotyping <sup>(7)</sup> <sup>(8)</sup>, male-dominated organizational cultures <sup>(9)</sup> <sup>(10)</sup>, and corporate practices that continue to favor men <sup>(11)</sup> <sup>(12)</sup>. Many talented and skilled women employees left the companies and started their own business <sup>(13)</sup> <sup>(14)</sup> <sup>(15)</sup>. The objective of the study is to review the literature concerning women career advancement of the past studies.

### **METHODOLOGY**

A structured literature review was done to identify the factors affecting Women Career Advancement. For summarizing the literature around the concept, literature review method was adopted as it is an accepted strategy to review concept <sup>(16)</sup>. The articles were sourced from electronic database.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Jouharah M. Abalkhail & Barbara Allan provided a comparative study in 2015, which focused on women's the perception of mentoring and networking with respect to their career development. This comparative study provides novel insights of mentoring and networking experiences from different women's perspectives to conclude how mentoring and professional networking within organizational settings is crucial to women's career progression<sup>(17)</sup>.

Women's network is a major pillar for women career advancement in organizations. Women's network is a major tool for individual career advancement and corporate competitive advantage as well. Women's network would gradually mould the characters and behaviors of women and allowing them to achieve their goals and leadership roles despite organizational barriers that stopped them from advancement in the past<sup>(18)</sup>.

In addition to this Orser, Allan Riding & Joanne Stanley (2012) found gender disparities in career progression may be reflected in the difficulty women face in developing and maintaining effective mentoring relationships. Mentoring studies also report that the gender composition of the mentor-program and mentoring relationship of human capital are relevant to career outcomes<sup>(19)</sup>.

Organizational support or supervisors support is a crucial factor for women career advancement. Organizational support for leadership, human resource practices and working conditions give a fullest support to the women in organizations<sup>(20)</sup>.

The results of the study by Marilyn Clarke, (2011) revealed that women's career may be shaped by developmental programs which always focus what is required as a range of strategies and support structures that provide opportunities for women to build social capital as well as new ways of thinking about work<sup>(21)</sup>.

Women need to have training and development programs in order to climb in their career advancement. Formal training could provide women with specific skill development such as team building and supervisory skills, interpersonal communication skills, and strategic planning, and knowledge. Along with this organizations should encourage informal trainings where women act as informal mentors to other women<sup>(22)</sup>.

Creating a favorable atmosphere to the women is another crucial task for organizations. Human Resource Development should develop Gender-equity policies and practices and gender quotas. It also should design family- friendly policies (e.g. on-site childcare, flexible work arrangements, and mentoring programs) which could ease the tension between family and work<sup>(22)</sup>.

Women's career advancement is influenced by individual, interpersonal and organizational factors. In construction field, individual factors plays a major significant role where organizational factors do not have any influence and interpersonal factors show negligible effect on women career advancement. Individual factors consist of family, personal and human capital<sup>(23)</sup>.

Psychological factors influence on women career advancement. Marital status has a significant impact on women career advancement, where female professional workers who were separated, divorced or widowed highly developed in their career than their married counterparts<sup>(2)</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

This article tried to trace the factors the factors affecting women career advancement in organization all over the world. This review of articles highlights the different factors which are affecting women career advancement from different perspective by different authors in past researches.

Along with these factors, Organization should work on this to develop the platform for the women in the organization. In addition, to this Even though plenty of studies consider the women career advancement all over the world, still the improvements of women in top position is questionable.

Therefore, identify the critical factors which are affecting women career advancement, and clarify why these factors are critical for the specific context is useful for the future researches.

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