

## WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

### ABSTRACT

***'Women and Leadership Roles'*** is culled from workshops conducted by Prof. Indira Parikh at the IIMA. From 1980 till date programmes exploring issues facing Women in Management are offered at the Institute. Issues surrounding leadership, work roles and authority are debated. The objectives are to explore the influence of the transformation of organisations on women's roles in the corporate world; to explore leadership roles and also individual life-spaces; to discover wholesome ways to actualise dreams and chart new career paths. The programmes are divided into two modules, Conceptual and Experiential. The conceptual module explores the impact of transformation in organisations on individual employees, particularly women. In the experiential module, the exploration is around life-spaces and systems where processes of socialisation in both family and work settings are highlighted.

How did women who are impacted by these diverse interfaces give shape to their roles? The paper discusses the experiences of the participants at home and at the workplace. Shifts in the mindsets of people and the society have contributed to the acceptance of working women as capable, hardworking and committed professionals and individuals. On the other hand, women commonly feel a constant pressure to perform and prove themselves at the workplace and simultaneously, a persistent feeling of guilt in coping up with the expectations of the family at home. Although several women have been successful in striking a balance between home and work, not many have managed to assume leadership positions in the corporate world, which was still considered a man's domain.

An important and interesting issue discussed in the paper is the exploration of women's life spaces, their identity and the roles they take, especially in terms of leadership. The life-space of women vis-à-vis the home and family and also vis-à-vis the workplace is analysed and discussed by the participants. At the home front the dynamics of in-laws, especially the interface of the women with their mother-in-law, their experience of motherhood and the dynamics of relationships with the husband, all contribute to the

dilemmas of marriage. The women shared some of their personal experiences related to their entry into the workplace and their interfaces with their superiors, colleagues and subordinates of both genders. The dilemmas faced by women in terms of assuming leadership roles, climbing the corporate ladder and contributing to decision-making processes in the organisation are, anchored in the socio-cultural context as well as in the maps and definitions they carry from the past.

Future scenarios were also painted by the participants. For the first time in recent history women have begun to assume leadership roles in the corporate world and are hopeful of blazing new trails for future generations and creating new role models. Women can look forward to the future with optimism. Women are experienced in managing one of the most complex organisation imaginable - the household, and therefore can apply their skills and experiences in terms of hard work and sensitivity in managing relationships, at the workplace. The authors discuss how women can be successful leaders if they achieve congruity between their inner instincts and their career goals. The Indian Woman today is at a threshold where she is confronting not only herself and her own inner feelings, historical conditioning and fears, but also managing interfaces in the outside world, both at home and workplace. As recent role models demonstrate, women tentatively are crossing this threshold, challenging themselves and blazing a new path for future generations.

Indian women and the society as a whole has moved from well-entrenched gender-centric roles, where Man was considered the leader and provider and Woman the idealised deity, submissive and subservient to the wishes of her family. The revolutionary thinking that is emerging, partly due to education and Western influences, recognises roles that are not stereotyped by gender and allow men to recognise their femininity and women their masculinity. This transformation is far from complete; however important beginnings have been made particularly in the metropolitan cities and in tomorrow's industries where enabling technologies have brought dramatic changes in terms of creating virtual workspaces.

## **WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP ROLES**

### **Women in Leadership Roles - Organizational Context**

Women have now worked in organizations for over five decades. They have contributed to the growth, culture and performance of organizations. This reality suggests that organizations need to evaluate specific issues that confront women, men, and organizations due to women's sustained presence and increasingly higher responsibilities, decision-making roles and rise in the corporate hierarchy.

As women have risen up the corporate ladder they have acquired leadership roles and have been assigned higher organizational responsibilities. Women in leadership positions encounter issues pertaining to handling power, exercising authority, providing direction and strategic initiatives, participating in policy formulation and interfacing with the external environment. Simultaneously, women encounter interfacial issues with superiors, colleagues and subordinates of both genders. Women in leadership roles are key role-holders and encounter unique dilemmas. These dilemmas faced by women are anchored in the socio-cultural context, the organizational culture, the external business environment, as well as in their own maps and definitions of role taking. Often the issues revolve around maintaining boundaries between personal and professional roles and relationships, being efficient at the workplace and managing familial roles effectively.

Organizations which design career paths for their female employees face issues of promotion, appraisal, competition between men and women colleagues, stereotypes about women in leadership roles and positions, and the personality traits of women leaders. Research findings ( Parikh I.J 1990, Parikh I.J and Shah. N 1992, Parikh I.J 1998, Parikh I.J and Engineer M.F 1999) suggest that women are capable and competent, are effective decision makers and can exercise authority. They take significant responsibilities in organizations and aspire for positions that are appropriate to the tasks they are doing. More and more women who opt for careers make hard choices, strive for performance and achievement and finally succeed in reaching senior positions.

During an address on February 25, 1998 at the inaugural event in a lecture series on Leadership, the President of Penn State University shared her thoughts and experiences about competitiveness and leadership:

- Success should not be measured in terms of polarities. The label-'success' or 'failure' has an impact on self-definition. Self-definition or Self-fulfillment could be sought by cherishing and searching for complexities, embracing ambiguities, taking risks and rejecting polarities.
- Leadership roles emerge when one follows the heart by doing what one loves. Passion and vision are the hallmarks of leadership.
- Women are gifted with the skills that they can develop as professional strengths to become effective leaders. The ability to bring people together, to encourage dialogue, build consensus and most importantly understand the social and emotional needs of others – all these qualities can bring about a significant change in the organization as all these are effective qualities needed to be a leader.
- Competitiveness is a quality essential for great leadership and many women tend to shy away from it. Healthy competition leads to internalized goal-setting and less fear of success. The willingness to share ideas, take risks, acquire new skills, forge new relationships and share feelings can go a long way in creating an environment which develops leadership qualities in women.
- When a woman raises child, she understands and learns about herself. The child rearing expands the definitions of success and commitment to leadership, as it becomes a challenge for the parent to make the world a better place for his young one. It is a challenge for mothers of today's generation to offer to their children, especially a male child, the opportunity to see the gender gap closing. The children of tomorrow stand for a generation which is shaped by the changing roles, concerns and problems of women and men, where there is more equality at work and at home. A healthier and happier society will emerge if there is involvement of men in supporting their spouse's career and in parenting of children. It would also help evolve more women to assume leadership roles.

## **The IIMA Leadership Programs for Women Managers**

Organizations have transformed since their inception during the Industrial Age. Industrialization in India is 100 years old. However, the conceptualization and formalization of organizations as we know them today is about five decades old. As part of Management Development, leadership programs for women are designed and conducted at the IIMA. From 1980 till date, programs on Women in Management, dealing with issues of role and authority, are offered at regular intervals. The aim of these programs is to assess how women and organizations perceive and deal with leadership roles and higher organizational responsibilities. They also seek to explore the inner life space of women in the context of increasing demands on their time and capabilities. The progression of women from junior management positions to managerial leadership and eventually to leadership roles is mapped.

### **Objectives of the Programs**

- The programs aimed at providing a setting where women in senior leadership positions could explore the influence of the organization on their role and could evaluate the environment in which organizations operate.
- The programs also aimed to provide an opportunity for women managers to explore their leadership roles in the organizational context, to discover their inner life space and in turn to discover wholesome ways of managing personal dreams and career paths.

### **Profile of Participants and Organizations**

The participants consisted of a cross-section of women managers from India and Sri Lanka. They held positions ranging from Creative Supervisors to Senior Lecturers to Deputy Managers in Finance or Marketing, to HR Managers and Assistant General Managers in Banks. Some held positions such as General Secretary, Collector or District Magistrate in the government. These participants represented a diverse mix of public sector and private sector companies, banks and financial institutions and government departments. Women from organizations/industry sectors such as Refineries, Product Marketing, Automobiles, Agriculture, Communications and Media and Education

participated in these programs. This diversity in participant profile lent a richness to the collective learning experience.

### **Methodology**

The programs was divided into two parts (i) a conceptual module and (ii) an experiential module. The conceptual module constituted the first part of the programs. Participants were provided with an overview of transformations occurring in the environment and in different organizations, in terms of structure, management practices etc. Issues related to policies and strategies; diversity of tasks and people, authority and leadership; and organization processes undergoing change were discussed. The module also explored issues of commitment, managerial role taking, attitudes, excellence, creativity in the organizational context and approaches to problem solving.

The second part of the program focussed on the experiential module where the exploration was around life spaces, processes of socialization in both family and work settings and crystallization of women's leadership roles and identity. The exploration was around how women could take charge of their life space and systems and give shape and meaning to their own lives.

### **Experiences Shared by the Participants**

The women shared their lives and experiences of growing up as well as their experiences in the organization. The observations were:

- Women have entered various new professions. Previously women usually chose professions such as teaching, nursing etc., whereas today they also choose careers in other areas such as management and finance.
- Women's entry into formal work organizations has been a decade later than men. Women and men carried social, cultural and personal maps from their traditional roles to the work place.
- Women are performing dual roles where priority needs to be given to the home, since most women still manage the household. However, some participants reported that times are changing as increasingly the husband's role is changing and becoming more supportive to both women and the home. Most women continue to carry

feelings of guilt when it comes to their interface with children and in-laws. The social-coding and the cultural-coding, eventually becomes a personal coding resulting in dilemmas around familial relationships.

- Women are assuming increasing responsibilities at work and spend long hours at the office. However women take a back seat when it comes to taking leadership roles and positions. Not many have risen above senior management levels to reach the uppermost echlons of management.
- Increasingly there is a change of attitude amongst men in perceiving women who are working (Parikh, Indira J, November 1989). Earlier, if a woman was successful the assumption was "somebody else (e.g. a man) was behind her success". There was invariably a postulation of a godfather promoting the woman's career. If a woman was friendly with a male colleague, it was always felt that she was having an affair. Platonic relationships were deemed to be improbable. However, many women felt that there is definitely a shift in these perceptions. Today if a woman is successful, it is perceived that she is hardworking and she has earned the position. Women experience a constant pressure to perform and prove themselves at the workplace.
- Many women participants observed that their women peers were not supportive of other women, whereas their male colleagues accepted them and were more supportive.
- It was observed that a number of well placed urban women executives enter the workplace proactively, to build careers and to derive job satisfaction. Although financial return is important, it is not the primary reason for working. This is in contrast to the past where women primarily entered the workplace to utilize their time or to support their families.
- Women are perceived and related to differently than their male colleagues at the workplace. If women present themselves as accomodating and mild, they are exploited. If they are assertive they are perceived as aggressive. This aggressiveness is reflected in women acquiring strong opinions, getting entrenched in arguments, loosing flexibility and negotiability, becoming insensitive to the opinions and feelings of others, loosing empathy and overall acquiring an attitude of "I know better" (Parikh Indira .J, WP.no. 98-05-02, 1998).
- Some women shared that at higher levels, it was generally men who occupy significant positions. Women in top positions are few and far apart. Women experience discrimination in processes leading to promotions. Often the organization

policies are different for male and female employees. For example, in one organization, the policy of medical reimbursement for dependents favored men. Men could claim medical expenses for his parents but women could not do so for her family. However, there are progressive changes in organizations and some women shared that they did not face any gender bias in their organizations. Overall it seems that there is positive progress within organizations in terms of evolving fair policies and practices for employees of both genders. Most women believed that there is a perceptible shift in mindset in how women are experienced in the organization. More and more men are accepting that women are competent, intelligent and capable. Women can generate resources. In some professions, women are considered better than men and in many organizations women are appreciated for their hard work and also for their beliefs and value systems. Many women felt that though these are healthy signs, a large multitude of working women still continue to live with stereotype images and expectations.

Addressing the issue of **Life Space**, the participants brought to the life space, socio-cultural codings of being a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law and a mother. Women largely carried guilt around the role of the mother and resentment against the husband for not fully supporting their career aspirations. There were some husbands who were supportive as well as encouraging which made life easier for women. The complex interplay between Self, Role, Identity and Systems created the juxtaposition of life space of women which had many conflicting nuances of growth and opportunities or surrender of their dreams and aspirations in the name of being good daughters, wives and mothers.

The themes that emerged from the discussions with the women participants reflected the following:

- Although the women accepted that they are capable, competent and committed, they grappled with issues of independence and autonomy. One participant identified a rebelliousness within herself and claimed that she did not need to 'ask anyone' before she made her own choices. She did not want to be under any obligation and so directed herself towards a self-contained and self-reliant stance. However, this stance was not conducive to building and fostering relationships.

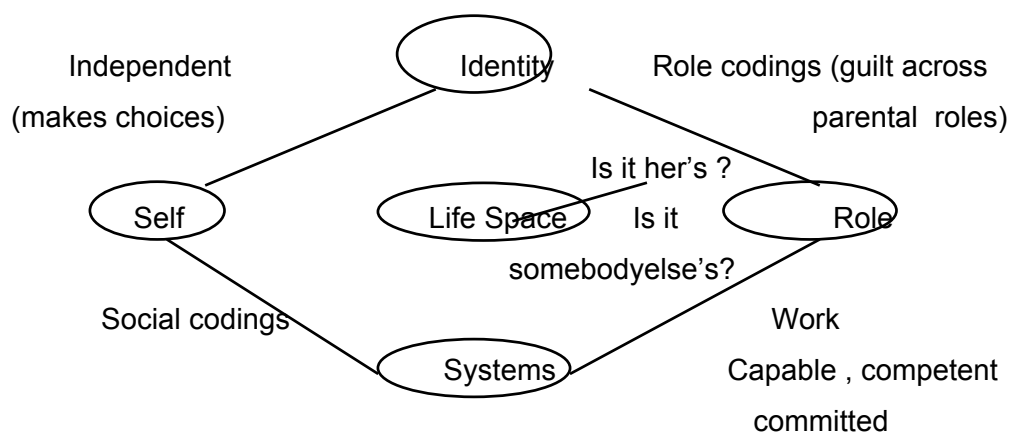


- The participants had learnt how to balance the conflicting demands of home and work, but it had resulted in their being overengaged and stretched.

Both women and men live with these deeply embedded social and cultural continuities. Continuities give us a purpose and a meaning, anchoring, belongingness, stability, security and code of conduct as we grow up in family settings and we experience and carry these cumulative experiences. The questions confronting women revolve around the kind of departures that women wish to make. What new beginnings can be made? There are also discontinuities as a result of changes in the environment which provide new choices and opportunities. If women make departures from social codings, they have to choose to listen to their own inner voice. Unless, women start looking at these issues and deal with deeply embedded social codings of the past, it becomes very difficult for women to achieve both social and psychological freedom for themselves. Moreover, unless women achieve this freedom, they carry feelings of resentment which keep haunting them and inhibits meaningful responses to the roles. They either surrender or rebel. Therefore there is a need to differentiate between action freedom and psychological freedom. Social and psychological freedom gives women many choices and alternatives to redefine their roles. Social freedom is given when the society transforms itself but the psychological freedom is experienced and acted upon with responsibility and commitment to self, others and the system simultaneously.

Given the above assumptions both of the agrarian and industrial society women's role in today's organizations can be put in the context of their present life space. The key question explored and reflected upon was - to whom does the life space of a woman belong? Do Women have their own identity? How do they play their roles? How do they take leadership roles? Figure 1 presents the key constituents of women's life space

**Figure 1**  
**Life Space of Women**



- The 'Self' consists of all that is held within-- the emotions, feelings, wishes, dreams and aspirations.
- The 'Identity' of women consists of all the meanings and the multiple roles as they evolve over a period of time, the choices and actions initiated and withheld and the paths chosen consciously or unconsciously.
- The 'Role' refers to the location and space available in the system, the opportunities aspired for and the real or perceived societal boundaries.
- 'Systems' reflect a space of belonging. Women grapple with the feeling whether home and work represent their own space, and whether they have ownership of these life spaces. The perception is that the home space belongs to the father or husband and the workspace belongs to male colleagues. Women are largely operative in other people's spaces and many have no personal sense of freedom and belonging.

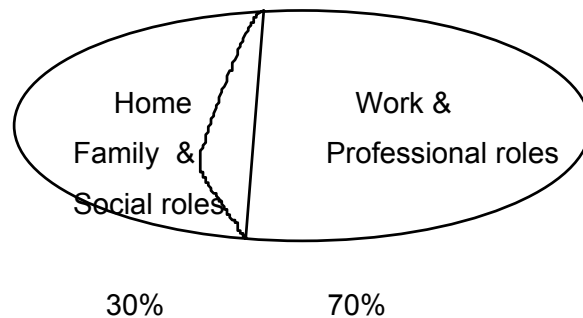
There were a few participants from Sri Lanka who shared their experiences. These women experienced a lot of pressure from their social roles. Moreover, like anywhere else they also experienced a lot of work pressure. Their jobs were very demanding. Their bosses were uncompromising in their approach when it came to standards of performance. The pressure from in-laws was also experienced but mostly in situations where the in-laws were less educated. In such situations, even the male-counterparts were not understanding. However, women who lived with their parents even after

marriage, found support in child rearing and freedom from anxiety in terms of their parenting role. This freed up time to engage in the workspace as they did not go through pangs of guilt due to pressure from the husband's family.

### Dilemmas of Personal and Professional Life

The group when exploring and analyzing their life spaces, felt that if they divided their life spaces between work and other roles, they would get the following distribution in terms of their psychological space.

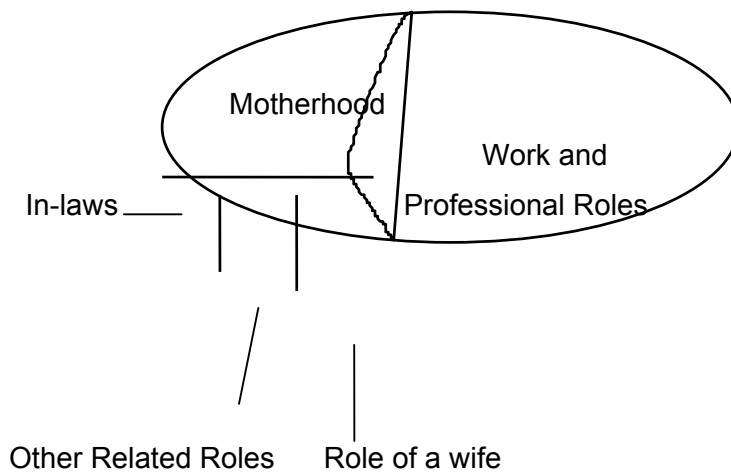
**Figure 2**  
**Life space of a working women vis-à-vis the home and family**



- Work takes about 70% of the women's psychological and physical space and time.
- Home, family and social roles take about 30% of the space and time.

If the women further distributed their time and space, the role of mother demanded the largest psychological and social space as seen in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**  
**Distribution of Social Roles and Spaces**



- In the social roles and spaces,  
80% of the space is for motherhood, 10% of the space is for the in-laws  
5% of the space is for other related roles, 5% of the remaining space is for the role of a wife.

This creates immense stress in the husband-wife relationship. Motherhood creates guilt due to the children's expectations of a mother who is always available at home. The in-laws are generally not supportive but demanding and critical. Moreover, they add to the woman's guilt by criticizing and judging her involvement in work negatively. Other social demands from the woman's own family and the network of social relationships make further demands on her space and time. The more she is engaged in work, the more discontent is voiced by the societal system.

Therefore the questions confronting women are, 'How long are they willing to see themselves in a mode where they live for social roles and work roles, and have no life space which they can call their own? What is the shared space which they can create for

themselves and their husbands in order to create a home and a family relevant for the times?’

The group then participated in an open discussion where they discussed their entry into the workplace, their experiences (both positive and negative) and how they had coped with emerging situations and how they managed their careers in a male-oriented work culture to acquire leadership positions and roles. Some of the personal experiences shared by women are found below.

- One of the participants joined the organization at a manager level. Her induction in to the organization was smooth. She did not have much difficulty with male colleagues, except with one or two who reflected social expectations and stereotyped roles as at that time not many women had entered the organization at a managerial level. There were men even today, who have never seen a woman working in a position of power and therefore had difficulty in accepting such roles of women. She remarked that many men felt that the actual place of women was at home and not at the workplace. In spite of these constraints, she managed the situation very graciously. She interfaced with male colleagues as far as tasks were concerned and gradually made them accept working women.
- One of the participants was in the sales department of her organization and was required to do a field job, where she faced a lot of discouragement from her male colleagues, as they thought that she would not be able to do it. There was a lot of pressure on her and she felt she was under a microscope. This attitude in fact made her more determined to take the assigned job as a challenge. She worked hard, undertook selling assignments and traveled all over the country. Wherever she went she had to prove herself. There was no easy acceptance. She took bus journeys with men, which surprised them. They thought that she must have joined the sales department due to some financial difficulty otherwise why would a woman want to do a sales job? She was rejected for many excellent job offers in the beginning but she would just go ahead, re- apply and challenge men on their own turf. She experienced her job as a kind of “Baptism by Fire”.
- There were times when a participant had to appraise a male subordinate elder to her. She found this extremely difficult, although male superiors routinely evaluate women elder to them.

- Many organizations have a culture where an MBA is considered to have an edge above others. For one of the woman participant who was in such a situation it was a constant challenge for her to prove herself, build rapport and gain credibility.
- Many women felt that men also have a habit of putting the women colleagues into a slot by personalizing relationships and considering them as their daughter, sister, mother or similar social roles. Instead of recognizing professional relationships, men personalize the interface by superimposing social roles.
- Another woman who had a field job had to face many insults but that did not discourage her from performing well. Finally her potential was recognized by the organization and she was promoted to a more responsible job.
- The Sri Lankan participants felt that earlier in their organizations there did exist an impression that female members cannot take responsibilities and therefore decision making roles and responsibilities were given only to men. However, they felt that gradually attitudes were changing and women are becoming empowered and are taking up responsible jobs. Over the years women have proved themselves in organizations.

### **A Prescription for the Future**

What is the future scenario for both the social and work settings and what are the new spaces to be designed for women?

Based on their collective experience and common needs women participants proposed the following changes for organizations of tomorrow:

- Organizations should have a transparent policy of merit-based promotions and not promotions based on gender. Salaries and increments should be determined solely on the basis of merit.
- An attitudinal change which fosters in both women and men a sense of ownership of tasks, commitment to work as teams and responsibility for organizational performance should emerge.
- Men should be educated to accept women at field work and in all spheres of work.
- While recruiting new candidates, rejection of a candidate on the basis of gender should not be allowed.

- Organizations should become more sensitive to the personal and familial needs of employees.
- Facilities like crèche, or a nursery for young children of women attending office should become the norm.
- Flexibility in work hours for both men and women will enable working couples to tailor their work schedules efficiently without compromising the organization's interest.
- Women today rise to positions of functional heads, but very few reach the position of a CEO. Hope was expressed that women would reach top positions.
- The trends indicate the emergence of more ambitious working women. Earlier women sought only a job. Then they aspired for job satisfaction. Later they aspired for recognition. Today some have reached leadership positions in the corporate world and become torch-bearers for others.
- More and more women are reaching higher levels. However, the policies in the majority of organizations are made keeping in mind only the men. This needs correction.
- In organizations the decision-making powers still vests with men. Women should also be given the opportunity to make decisions as they have unique insights and some are excellent lateral thinkers.
- Sharing of work between men and women should take place. Due to social codings of the past, home responsibilities are still seen as only a woman's responsibility. More and more men need to join women in managing the internal interfaces of the home environment:

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Women need to ask themselves whether they are aspiring for a job, a career, or a 'higher calling' in life, since leaders are motivated from the inside-out. Their drive comes from within and is only exhibited by their outward behavior. Few women may be privileged to achieve congruity between the 'calling' and their career, since many women are obliged to earn their livelihood from available jobs. Nonetheless, the point is well taken that when possible one should follow one's heart and be driven by inner urge and passion. We believe that counseling and career planning opportunities, if available to

young women at the right time could go a long way towards incubating the leaders of tomorrow.

Women are experienced in managing one of the most complex organizations imaginable - the household, with its many human interfaces and interplay between the sexes, different age groups and different stakeholders. Women have learnt over the centuries, the art of negotiation and reconciliation and qualities of patience and understanding, along with an inherent quality of emotional intelligence. All these transferable skills can be brought to bear upon the workplace making it the richer from these valuable experiences.

Perhaps by addressing the two questions below, we can gain insight about women becoming successful leaders in the next century.

*What Leadership Roles shall women play in future?*

The genesis of the answer lies in the careful examination of the question itself. Perhaps in future as true meritocracy becomes manifest, the question itself will be unnecessary since leadership is in no way inherently constrained by gender but only by gender bias. In the future, both men and women will play leadership roles in all aspects of life, become total and complete human beings fulfilling different facets of their inner being at home, at the workplace and in the society at large. Artificial fragmentation and divisive labels such as male and female professionals, housewives and working women etc. will melt away making way for a holistic approach to living. Only with this fundamental attitudinal shift, can the fullest potential of man and woman be realized, channelising human energy into productive and positive endeavors.

*What conscious efforts can organizations take to maximize the potential of its female human resources?*

An excellent beginning would be to acknowledge the basic biological differences that exist between the genders. Women conceive children and therefore need appropriate maternity leaves and arrangements built into their long-term career plan. Surprisingly, organizations do not plan for these basic differences and do not work with their female



employees to evolve common sense approaches to these issues. Flexible work arrangements that emphasize outcomes and productivity supported by enabling technologies would also help both organizations and employed women to get the best out of each other and will facilitate the growth and progress of women leaders.

The significant questions women need to ask themselves are:

- Are women really in charge of their own life spaces? Are their spaces that they can call their own?
- Can women say “ this space is ours and we can invite others” and can women make their own choices?
- Are women open to introspecting and possibly discovering a stranger within themselves?
- Do women own up the uniqueness of their own existence? In other words, do women truly value and respect themselves?
- Can women shape their own destiny?

After a long psychological journey, some women do arrive at a new threshold beyond the horizon. These women have attempted to discover the wholesomeness of the proactive (i.e, anchored in the self) spirit of human existence. Every society and culture has some women who have crossed this threshold and created a space beyond the horizon. These women are the pioneers who add something more to themselves and make life and the process of living a little more wholesome, dignified and gracious than before. Each step on this path requires a pause to reflect deeply on the elements of the past and the present - to shut the door of the past, to experiences which has been lived through and to take a step into the unknown. One of the anchors of the space beyond the horizon lies in the freedom to make a choice and to experience the present. To experience the present, women have to free themselves from the associative universe and the overwhelming symbols of past experiences. This is a necessary step, since the present has one foot in the past and one in the future. The past contains many memories - some good, some bad; some happy, some sad; some creative, some destructive; some glowing with radiance, others with hate; some with guilt and shame, others with pride and achievement. These bitter-sweet memories have added up, drop

by drop and day by day, to make life a vast panorama of experiences. The other anchor of the present lies in the space beyond the horizon - where instead of hope there is engagement with the world, instead of dreams there is commitment, instead of aspirations there are choices, instead of ideals there are convictions, instead of bestowal and affirmation there is courage. Time and again, the social code of conduct imposed on women and the role-taking processes defined by the cultural lore, prevent the woman from experiencing the stranger in herself which unfolds in each moment. It tames and tempers her being which is otherwise boundless and bursting with energy. Many a women experience terror - at crossing the threshold to a space beyond the horizon, as this space demands that she takes charge of her destiny and her life space around her. These women struggle to take a few steps forward since their vision of their own life propels them to make a choice. They struggle to confront human existence with resilience. They rise time and again from the ashes to respond to their commitments. They reach out to experience their human spirit and the essence of life. Woman after woman has abandoned the choice to make contact with the spirit of human existence within them. The confrontation with this threshold and the space beyond the horizon is really an encounter with the inner realities of the self. It is a space to own up to the self and to unfold its resources. These psychological resources are designed for new role taking and making choices for action (Parikh, Indira. J., and Garg, Pulin. K., 1989).

Our experience of several years with the IIMA workshops suggests that women have crossed new thresholds and are carving a niche for themselves in various fields and are blazing a new path for the future generations. The new Millennium will perhaps witness leaders who will not be identified by their gender but by their capability, their vision and their competence.