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**RE-IMAGINING MANAGEMENT  
EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY  
THE WAY AHEAD**

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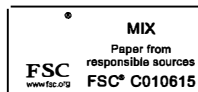
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# Still Some Way to Go: Gender Equality and Management Schools

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In this chapter, I will discuss gender equality with a focus on schools of management. First, to give some background, I look at the gender gap in different countries. Some country comparisons are introduced, and special attention is paid to the situation in India. Next, I present some key constructs concerning women in the context of management, as well as arguments for the importance of advancing gender equality in this context. Although it is widely accepted that gender equality in general is crucial to the sustainable development, prosperity, and wellbeing of societies, organizations, and individuals (Sen, 1985; The Sustainable Development Goals, 2015; The Global Gender Gap Report, 2020), it is still not unusual to hear that the topic is irrelevant, even insignificant.

Finally, I propose a framework for how management schools can develop gender equality in their organizational activities. I hope that the discussion in this paper will encourage critical reflection of the assumptions, actions, and traditions that inhibit gender equality, not only in schools of management, but also more generally in society.

## The Global Gender Gap

No country in the world has yet attained gender equality. According to *the Global Gender Gap Report* (2020) by the World Economic Forum, none of us will see gender equality in our lifetime if progress continues at the current pace. There are two aspects to gender equality: equal opportunities and equal outcomes. ‘Equal opportunities’ means that women, men, and people of other genders have equal opportunities to participate and express themselves in social activities. ‘Equal outcomes’, in turn, refers to people’s circumstances; for example, are men, women, and those of other genders equally represented in educational contexts, in entrepreneurship, and in positions in working life, and do they receive the same pay for the same work? (Hearn et al., 2015.)

The World Economic Forum has reported on gender equality since 2006, using a wide range of sources and statistics to evaluate the situation in different countries. Key information includes country rankings on the basis of specific criteria, and this makes important comparisons across countries possible. Such rankings can promote global awareness of the problems and challenges that follow from gender gaps, and give ideas about how to reduce these problems. In 2020, 153 countries were ranked.

The Global Gender Gap Report (2020) evaluates gender equality according to four criteria: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Gender equality in management is considered especially in the contexts of economic participation and opportunity, and political empowerment. Economic participation and opportunity includes three areas, namely the participation gap, the remuneration gap, and the advancement gap. The participation gap deals with the difference between women and men in terms of participation rates in the labour force; the remuneration gap refers to the ratio of female-to-male earned income; and the advancement gap looks at the ratio of women to men in managerial and professional jobs. Political empowerment evaluates the gap between men and women at the highest levels of political decision-making.

According to the Global Gender Gap Report (2020), in 2020, Iceland was the most gender-equal country in the world, for the 11th time in a row, and with still higher ratings in 2020 than in 2019. The report shows that Iceland has closed almost 88 percent of its overall gender gap. Despite the need for some further improvements, this country can therefore currently be regarded as the best country in the world for women to live in. Iceland has several laws concerning gender equality that protect women at work and eliminate gender discrimination in different spheres of life. For example, in Iceland, equal pay for equal work is mandatory, and company boards must include at least 40 per cent women. From pre-school to higher education, pupils and students learn about equality issues. There is a specific ministry for gender equality, as well as other agencies of gender equality. Finally, the country has the best parental (not only maternal) leave system and policy in the world; parents split leaves equally to enable children to grow up with equal care from both parents. (See <https://www.globalcitizen.org/es/content/7-iceland-feminist-law-women/>.) The Global Gender Gap Report (2020) shows that Iceland has closed both, its educational attainment, and its health and survival gaps, and it is the top performer in terms of political empowerment. The country also has the second-best performance in terms of economic

participation and opportunity, with women often being able to advance to senior and managerial roles.

The Nordic countries generally come out well in gender equality, globally. The Global Gender Gap Report (2020) shows that after Iceland, Norway is second, Finland is third, and Sweden is fourth. In these Nordic countries, well over 80% of the distance to parity has already been covered. For instance, in Finland, where gender equality is considered a cornerstone of societal welfare, women are highly educated, their education level exceeding that of men. In 1906—over 110 years ago—Finland was the first country in the world to pass a legislation giving women the right to vote and to stand as candidates in national elections. The country has had a female president and, at the time of writing this chapter (2021), the prime minister is a woman. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, approximately half of all Finnish ministers have been women. However, to mention some problems that Finland faces, it is fair to say that compared to men, women have lesser access to managerial positions, especially at top management levels, and slower advancement in their career. Women carry double the burden compared to men: they are more often responsible for childcare and for other unpaid work at home, and they usually work full-time outside the home, too. The Covid-19 pandemic has increased women's unpaid domestic responsibilities and their problems in professional life. Additionally, there is gender segregation between different branches of business and different professions, as well as a pay gap.

The Global Gender Gap Report (2020) shows that India has closed 66.8 percent of its overall gender gap. It is an important achievement for India that it is ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in political empowerment. On the other hand, the country ranks only 149<sup>th</sup> in economic participation and opportunity. The income gap is very wide: female income in India is only one-fifth of male income, which is anyway among the world's lowest (144<sup>th</sup>). Besides, women account for only 14 percent of leadership roles (136<sup>th</sup>). Women's access to education is difficult, although there has been some advancement in recent years, especially in the field of tertiary education. In terms of health and survival, the country ranks as low as 150<sup>th</sup> out of the 153 countries that have been ranked. In India, there are more males than females in the population. This points to the phenomenon of the "missing women", as described by Amartya Sen (1992). According to Sen, there is a deficit of women in significant parts of Asia and North Africa, due to sex bias and comparative neglect of girls in terms of care.

Chapman and Mishra (2019) have presented several issues that cause problems for women in working life and in their career in India. They argue that traditional patriarchal social values and norms restrict women's freedom to work and to have agency. These values and norms are the power relationships by which men dominate women in different spheres of life (Beechey, 1979, p. 66). Chapman and Mishra (2019) also claim that rising household incomes have created a disincentive for labour market participation among women, typically informed by the same values and norms. Women's work in India tends to be unpaid care work, and many women work in informal business sectors. Additionally, occupational segregation is a problem. Choudhury and Kumar (2021) say that cultural and customary traditions discriminate against women in Indian working life, especially because of the patriarchal norms and values.

All in all, the Global Gender Gap Report (2020) reports that gender equality stands at 68.6 percent on average among the 153 countries ranked. The largest gender gap is the political gender gap and the second largest is the gender gap in economic participation and opportunity. On average, however, some progress can be seen in educational attainment, and health and survival, compared with previous reports.

## **Women and Management**

In this section, I will present some of the key constructs concerning women in the context of management. They are:

- *tokenism*
- *double bind*
- *glass ceiling*
- *class labyrinth*

I will consider and discuss the nature and effects of the constructs, and I will look at some of the main reasons why it is important to promote gender equality in the context of management.

## **Key Constructs**

Interest in the question of women and management dates back to the 1970s, although there was some discussion of the topic even earlier. However, it can be said that the 1970s is the decade when the relevance of the topic was really acknowledged in the context of management. In 1977, Harvard Business School professor, Rosabeth Moss Kanter,



published a seminal book, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, in which she made famous the construct of *tokenism*. Tokenism refers to the presence of people in the workplace who are few in number but have high visibility among other staff, such as women who are managers. This creates pressure on these 'tokens' to do their work according to higher standards than those that apply to their colleagues. It has been reported that women, to be able to reach a similar position in a managerial career to men, need to have better education and greater competence, and they need to work harder than men (Klenke, 2011; Lämsä and Hiillos, 2008; Lämsä and Savela, 2014). Women are often evaluated less favourably than their male counterparts with similar backgrounds and experience.

One effect of tokenism on women in a managerial career is that they are easily isolated by the majority group (men), and women's differences from men are exaggerated. Women are assumed and expected to act in a stereotypically feminine way. Kanter (1977) noticed that women at all levels of an organization tend to be recruited and work in 'typically female' jobs because they are believed not to fit into traditional male occupations and jobs. Consequently, women in managerial positions often work in the fields of human resource management, marketing and communication, which are considered suitable for women because they are thought to be 'softer', people-related areas. Guy (1994) said that the move to advance women in managerial positions was originally based on the idea that women can bring a feminine, 'humanizing' influence on management and leadership. Zimmer (1988) argued that tokens are recruited and admitted to a group because this proves that the group does not discriminate against minorities. This kind of situation occurs when one woman or a few women are hired as a member or members of a managerial and/or board group with the belief that doing this means that gender equality is achieved.

The idea of tokenism has been applied to describe and explain, especially, the barriers and difficulties that women experience when they work in male-dominated occupations and professions. Many women experience negative attitudes, biases, and problems because of their gender in these kinds of work contexts. Kanter (1977) argued that women's situations improve when the proportion of women increases significantly: when tokens make up about 40 per cent of management, or of an organization or any group, their negative experiences are thought to start to disappear. Thus, according to Kanter, increasing the number of women in managerial roles and positions contributes to solving the problem of tokenism and results in women receiving 'normal' treatment.

However, this argument is open to criticism. Zimmer (1988), for instance, found that when men experience themselves as tokens, they experience different outcomes from women. In a group, for instance, the only man is often selected to be the chairperson, but this seldom happens to the sole woman. The only woman tends to end up in a secretarial or other service role.

Zimmer (1988) made the point that although Kanter (1977) acknowledges the importance of organizational environment and culture in the treatment of tokens, the idea of tokenism does not give due recognition to the broader social, political, and cultural structures, norms, and systems that maintain gender inequality in society. For example, as mentioned above, in India, a key reason for women's unequal position in working life is the existence of traditional patriarchal social values and norms in society (Chapman and Mishra, 2019). The negative attitude and behaviour towards women working in management may not be motivated so much by the women being in a numerical minority as by men's and women's stereotypical beliefs and their assessment that women are generally less competent than men, and are too weak, emotional, and irrational for managerial roles. This kind of stereotyping tends to be accepted as self-evident and is, therefore, difficult to acknowledge and change (Lämsä and Sintonen, 2001). This poses an important challenge to transformational learning and the leadership capability in any community.

Partial support for the theory of tokenism has been put forward (Stichman et al., 2010; Srivastava et al., 2018). However, what needs saying here is that the reliance on numbers in tokenism is a limited viewpoint. Although the quantitative approach adopted in the theory of tokenism is obviously useful, by itself, it does not explain and solve the problems related to tokenism.

Another important construct to consider in seeking to understand women's role and the challenges they face in management is *the double bind*. Women are in a double bind because there is a conflict between their gender appropriateness and the expectations of what makes effective management. In other words, a woman in a managerial career tends to experience two irreconcilable expectations and demands between two conflicting courses of behaviour (Jamieson, 1995). On one hand, she needs to show traditional femininity (caring, nurturing, a relational orientation, helpful behaviour) in the form of behaviours that are considered appropriate for women. On the other hand, in managerial positions and roles, what is seen as specifically masculine

behaviour (competitiveness, autonomy, toughness, ambition) is expected; masculine behaviour is regarded as an appropriate and necessary feature of managerial and leadership behaviour, and it is strongly associated with men (Wajcman, 1998; Grint, 2011; Klenke, 2011). Simpson (2006) claimed that this kind of masculinity is embedded not only in actual management in organizations, but also in managerial education, through the emphasis on 'hard skills'. These skills are culturally linked to masculinity when it comes to the values of management, the subjectivity of the manager, and the performance of the managerial role.

According to Jamieson (1995), the idea of the double bind originated in the work of the scientist Gregory Bateson in the 1950s. Later, the idea was used by the linguist, Robin Lakoff in the context of society's requirements and expectations for women. Lakoff (1975) argued that to be valued and respected one needs to speak like other members of one's sex; for the male—and here we are specifically concerned with the male manager—this is not a problem, because males generally get respect, but women, especially in the context of management, cannot speak in the expected, traditional feminine way.

In the Indian context, Patwardhan and colleagues (2016) found that the double bind is a barrier to women's career advancement. In their study they explored men's attitudes, and found that women's feminine behaviour was considered to be a problem. According to the study participants, women managers are emotional and timid in their managerial behaviour, and these characteristics inhibit their career advancement. This may have several consequences for women. Women do not like the kind of organizational culture they encounter, and feel stressed in it; therefore, do not want to work in the organization, or at least do not want to make a long career there, so their input and talents are lost. This, it is argued, is the result of the fact that the double bind causes wellbeing problems, and stress and frustration to the people who face it (Jamieson, 1995). Malhotra and Sachdeva (2005) reported that Indian women on the way to managerial positions face a strong double bind.

On the other hand, if they want to advance in their career, women may try to adapt to the masculine culture by modifying their behaviour and taking on some of the required masculinity. To do this, the woman has to reconstruct her identity and image to fit in better with traditionally masculine characteristics. The metaphor in literature for the kind of woman who might do this is the iron woman or iron lady (Kanter, 1977; Lämsä & Tiensuu, 2002). One classic example is Margaret Thatcher, who

was called 'the iron lady', an epithet that was linked to her leadership style and her position as prime minister. One final solution to the double bind is that the organizational culture, with its values, norms, and habits, may be changed so that the double bind phenomenon decreases slightly. This implies a transformational change in which organizational culture, the organization's power and gender relations, as well as the image of effective management need to be questioned and changed.

The third famous construct in the field of women and management is *the glass ceiling*. Majority of the research on women in the context of management has focused on and used this construct. The concept first appeared at the beginning of the 1980s, but became famous and widely recognized after it was used in a Wall Street Journal article in 1986 (Carli & Eagly, 2016). The glass ceiling is a metaphor for unseen barriers that prevent women from progressing up the organizational hierarchy, regardless of their skills, qualifications, or achievements (Morrison et al., 1987; Hearn et al., 2015). The barriers are evidence of the discrimination and the clear line of demarcation between those who advance (men) and those who are left behind (women). The glass ceiling refers to the increasing force of gender-related problems and disadvantages at the higher levels of a hierarchy than at the lower levels,; the glass ceiling also refers to the fact that such problems tend to increase in the course of a woman's career. (Cotter et al., 2001.)

An interesting viewpoint on the glass ceiling phenomenon in Indian working life is presented by Naqvi (2011). According to Naqvi, one problem is that although Indian men do not mind having women as subordinates, they do not like having them as their managers. Jain and Mukherji (2010) report that Indian men tend to deny the existence and effect of the glass ceiling, and that Indian businesses have no commitment to solving the problem by developing policies, systems, procedures, and practices to promote women in a career. As a solution, the authors call for government regulations and tax incentives for organizations.

One problem in talking about the glass ceiling is that the idea creates the impression that women are actually prevented from reaching top levels of management. However, it is well known that an increasing number women have started advancing to management levels. It is also known that women's careers are more complex than men's, and that women need to combine and handle multiple aspects of their lives to be successful in a managerial career (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; Ezzedein & Ritchey, 2009; Heikkinen et al., 2014; Lämsä & Piilola, 2015). It therefore seems that the path to the management level does remain

complex—at least for some women. Consequently, more recently, the construct of a *glass labyrinth* has been introduced as another metaphor to explain the challenges women face in a career (Eagly & Carli, 2006; Carli & Eagly, 2016). It is argued that this metaphor better describes women's careers in current working life.

The glass labyrinth illustrates the idea that women can advance in a career, even to positions at the very top, as some women have managed to do, but the path is challenging and difficult to find. Some paths to management are not as difficult as others, but some paths do not lead anywhere. Carli and Eagly (2016) say that building a successful path to management is not guaranteed but requires patience and effort on women's part. The labyrinth metaphor is a subtle description of women's careers; it is more positive than the glass ceiling because it allows the existence of a road to career advancement, despite the challenges and complexities that women face throughout their careers. Moreover, the labyrinth metaphor is not focused solely on women as individuals, but, additionally, it takes into consideration the links between the competencies and motivation of women and the challenges and opportunities of the situation.

The labyrinth idea also underlines that men are the main architects of the labyrinth and, consequently, enjoy a more unencumbered road to management than women do (Bruckmüller et al. 2013). Hancock et al. (2018) conducted an empirical study on the glass labyrinth focusing on sport management, which is a male-dominated field. In this study, the perceptions of sport management students were investigated. The results show that both female and male sport management students are conscious of the career challenges that women face in the field. Hancock and colleagues concluded that despite their awareness of the challenges that women have to overcome to make a career, male students nevertheless tend to believe that there are no longer any real barriers to women progressing in their careers.

## **Arguments for the Advancement of Women's Careers**

Although legislation and official rules can provide a framework for women's career advancement by promoting gender equality in organizations and society, in our discussion here, the focus is on two other significant arguments, suggested by Gatrell and Swan (2008), among others:

- *the business case argument*

- *the ethical argument*

On the one hand, gender equality means more gender diversity in managerial staff and in the organization's decision-making bodies, and diversity when managed properly is a means for increasing organizational competitiveness and performance. This argument is called *the business case argument* for diversity (Cox & Blake 1991; Bassett-Jones, 2005). The focus is on the benefits that gender equality can generate for organizations as well as for individuals and society. On the other hand, questions of gender are important because of concerns over social and workplace inequalities. This refers to *the ethical argument*, which must also be taken into consideration.

Seen from the viewpoint of *the business case argument*, it can be said that in order for organizations, the society, and individuals to thrive and succeed, attention must be given to all the available competence and knowledge. It is therefore problematic if society does not make full use of women's know-how, talents, and skills, especially considering that many women are highly educated (Hearn et al., 2015; The Global Gender Gap, 2020.) Moreover, many women have practical skills and tacit knowledge based on their experiences in the domestic sphere even if their level of education is low. The use and development of this knowledge and these skills with the help of educational and self-efficacy support can result in women's success in entrepreneurship and business, or in a paid job (Nussbaum, 2011; Lämsä & Savela, 2019). Often, however, women's experiential knowledge is not taken very seriously and it tends to be played down in many communities, including India (Sankaran & Madhav, 2011).

Lämsä and Piilola (2015) studied the meaning of motherhood with respect to leadership. Typically, motherhood is not seen as important and useful in organizational life. The most common perspective in any discussion of the work-family relationship is the conflict perspective (Byron, 2005). This leads to the understanding that women who are mothers have limited resources to give when participating in career roles: their domestic role is seen to have a negative effect on their role and professional performance. However, Lämsä and Piilola (2015) showed that although work-family integration is challenging for many women, motherhood can help women to develop a deeper understanding of other people's perspectives in their workplace environments. Motherhood can develop various practical competencies which are necessary for effective leadership: motherhood teaches women to organize, to delegate, and to react quickly and innovatively in changing situations, particularly those

involving employees' work-family conflicts. Motherhood makes for increased flexibility in attitudes and behaviour, good multitasking skills, speed in problem-solving, and tolerance of "fuzzy conflicts". Peuss et al. (2015) reported that, in the Indian context, families are not experienced by working women as a burden but rather as a source of support when things at work are not going well. So instead of seeing motherhood solely as a problem, motherhood (and parenthood in general) can be a substantial resource in working life and in a leadership role, and in this way, it can make a useful contribution to organizational performance.

Although findings concerning the effects of women managers on organization-level performance are inconclusive, a study based on a panel of the largest 2500 companies in Denmark showed evidence of a positive effect of women in top management on company performance, for example, in terms of gross profit (Smith et al., 2006). In this study, the positive effect was found to be linked to female managers with a university degree; women without a university degree were found to have a smaller, even an insignificant effect on company performance. Kotiranta et al. (2007), who based their study on a large company-level dataset in Finland, found that a firm where the CEO was a woman was about ten percent more profitable than a corresponding firm led by a man. In the study, other variables such as industry and company size were also taken into account as possibly having an effect on profitability.

Gender diversity has been found to be positively linked to organizational innovation by Díaz-García et al. (2013) in their study of Spanish companies. Ruiz-Jiménez and del Mar Fuentes-Fuentes (2016) found, also in the Spanish context, that management capabilities have a positive effect on the innovation performance of small and medium-sized companies operating in the technology sector, and the effect is stronger when the managerial group is balanced in the number of men and women. Voeten (2016) shows that gender diversity, at all levels of the organization, has a positive influence on innovation in low and lower-middle income countries in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Voeten argues that the level of women's economic opportunity available in a country has a key role in establishing the link between innovation and gender diversity. Voeten emphasizes the significance of gender diversity for innovation. Businesses and public sector organizations should therefore develop programmes and policies to hire a more gender-balanced workforce and have more women in management, including top management.

Although achieving gender equality is a prerequisite for securing performance, competitiveness, innovation, and growth (The Global Gender Gap Report, 2020), the advancement of gender equality is also based on *the ethical argument*. According to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (2015), ending discrimination against girls and women is a human right, and essential for a sustainable future. More women with their ideas and viewpoints are needed in decision-making bodies in societies, organizations, and communities to ensure social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Having more women in leadership and management roles advances gender equality, makes women's viewpoints visible, and provides role models to girls and young women. The promotion of gender equality is a sign that organizations such as management schools are shouldering their social responsibility for the future.

The Indian Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen emphasizes in his 'capabilities approach' that instead of focusing only on the economic aspect of equality, interest should also be focused on women's real opportunities to be able to lead a valuable life (Robeyns, 2005). Advancing women's opportunities is an ethical imperative so that they can function in their lives as fully as possible. Such capabilities as bodily integrity, being informed and cultivated by education and knowledge, and being able to control one's own life, are examples of what is needed, to be able to live a valuable life (Nussbaum, 2011).

The capabilities approach is based on the idea that in evaluating wellbeing and the quality of life, the focus should be on what people are and what they can do (Sen, 1999). Capabilities are an individual's opportunities to achieve freely something that they value; and finding meaningful 'functionings' (Sen, 1999) is their actual achievement. Capability, then, is an opportunity, and functioning is an outcome (Robeyns, 2005). Seen from women's viewpoint, capabilities are their potential functionings. Functionings refer to women's real being and doing, and the term covers such things as being healthy, having paid work, being a member of a social community, being able to participate in a community, and having an influence on decision-making in a community. For example, having a career in management is a woman's functioning, while having the realistic potential to have such a career is a capability (Lämsä et al., 2020). Consequently, following this line of thought, advancing and supporting women's opportunities and empowerment is an ethical imperative.



Cornelius and Skinner (2005) are among the scholars who have investigated women's career barriers from the point of view of the capability approach. They have argued that women's skills, expertise, and competencies, once enabled, are internal capabilities that can be readily used. However, it is important to note that women's skills and competencies are linked to and shaped by factors in the environment; these are social, political, cultural, legal, institutional, and community factors, and they are called external capabilities. Capabilities, then, are a combination of the internal and external capabilities that both, enable and limit the woman's functionings in her career.

Sometimes this combination is forgotten, especially when the focus is on women and their career possibilities in the context of management, and what is called an individualistic discourse is assumed in the discussion and argumentation. In other words, it is argued that women's progress and opportunity in a career is based merely on personal characteristics, competence, autonomy, and choices. However, such elements as people's varying access to resources, the environment in which they were brought up, social norms, and habit also affect the opportunities available to them; these elements are not pre-determined and inevitable, but the result of human actions, which can be changed.

## **Framework for Gender Equality**

One crucial actor in the advancement of gender equality in the context of management is the education provided in schools of management. Educational institutions are crucial pillars in any society, responsible for bringing development, hope, opportunities, and sustained change (Lämsä et al., 2020). For schools of management to respond to the call to advance gender equality requires change, and novel ways of thinking and acting in the schools' own strategies, leadership, culture, and practices.

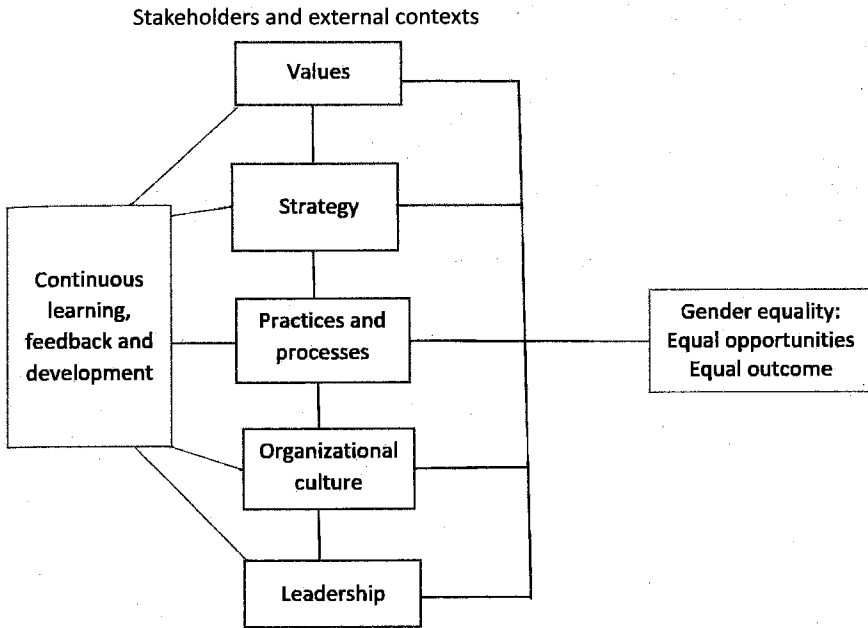
Mavin and colleagues (2004) argued that management education operates according to the gender blindness approach. Gender blindness is a failure to understand and recognize the role and significance of gender as an element in the practices of a social institution. Here, it refers to this failure in the context of management schools, and in interactions between the members of the school, between students and staff, as well as between the school and its stakeholders. Kelan and Dunkley (2010) report a similar result. They say that the nature of gender inequality is made invisible in the management school context, and that therefore, little opportunity exists to reflect on and discuss the unequal structures,

practices, and processes at the organizational level. One explanation for gender blindness is the idea of adaptive preferences in the capability approach (Sen, 1995). According to this idea, women tend to adapt to their lower status, unequal circumstances, and other unfavourable factors in their environment without resistance and without even recognizing the lack of equality because they have been used to these circumstances for such a long time that they take them for granted and are habituated to them. Moreover, men's dominant position tends to be taken for granted by both men and women.

Lämsä and colleagues (2008) found that their experience at business school can shape both, men and women students' attitudes, and that their estimate of the importance of equal-opportunity employment decreases in the course of their education among both, men and women. Nonetheless, women's attitudes in general tend to be more positive to the advancement of gender equality and corporate social responsibility than the attitudes of men. Management students are tomorrow's decision-makers, who will be responsible for the values, strategies, and practices that will be regarded as good in future working life and in society, more widely. It is therefore, relevant to discuss what schools of management can do in terms of their own activities, to promote and support gender equality. In this discussion, I will focus on schools' organizational, management, and leadership activities, which are based on the values of the institution. The activities need to be conducted on strategic and operational levels and to be embedded in the discussion of managerial tasks and leadership initiatives. It is important to take into account the school's own activities, because schools have a crucial part to play as role-models and examples for their students, shaping their mindsets and attitudes in relation to gender equality.

Drawing on ideas from the classical systems theory for organization and management (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972), my proposal here is that the promotion of gender equality in schools of management depends on a holistic social system and specific interrelated sub-systems. The sub-systems, their relationships, feedback, and learning from one another, as well as from stakeholders, form the totality of the dynamic system for gender equality. To achieve results, all aspects of the system must be acknowledged, maintained, and developed at the same time. Here, I will focus on the internal activities of the school, but it is also important to recognize the role of the school's environment and eco-system in general. The school of management and its activities are linked with, shaped by,

and in turn, affect the school's stakeholders and the school's environment. The key elements of the proposed system are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Key Elements of the Management Education Institution's Social System for Gender Equality

*Values* for gender equality signal what is important and preferred in the institution (Schein, 2010). Values are motivational by nature, and they determine the way organization members behave, and justify their opinions and behaviour (Schwartz, 1992). Values are normative ideas and preferences, and they therefore guide how well gender equality is taken into consideration and appreciated in the school.

There are various value categories. One well-known model is that of Schwartz (1992), who distinguishes four main categories: openness to change, self-enhancement, conservation, and self-transcendence. With reference to gender equality, openness to change refers to seeing learning and innovation as crucial values for gender equality. Self-enhancement is connected to superiority and prestige; it is indicated by economic success and an employer's reputation for equality, therefore attracting more people from minorities to work there. Conservation as a category stresses tradition; valuing and accepting traditional ideologies, customs, and norms is crucial, and in the patriarchal context, this value does not advance gender equality. Finally, self-transcendence is related to a school's motivation to advance people's wellbeing and needs; respect, and

the acceptance of gender diversity are important in this category. From this we can conclude that three of Schwartz's value categorizations can promote gender equality (openness to change, superiority and prestige, and self-transcendence), while one (conservation) is likely to be a barrier to its promotion.

In a management school, it might be useful to seek an appropriate balance of the three promoting values instead of focusing solely on one category, in order to avoid over-emphasizing any one perspective. Stressing only on openness to change might result in chaos. Putting too much stress on superiority and prestige could end up in instrumental relationships and fierce competition between people, groups, or other units; this could prove harmful to cooperation and the sharing of common goals. Self-transcendence in excess can result in too much individualism.

Broadly speaking, a management school's *organizational strategy* is its plan for how progress can be made from the present situation regarding gender equality, to what one hopes for in the future. A strategy here, is a pattern that manifests itself in the school's actions and practices (Mintzberg, 1978). Strategies related to gender equality can be divided into the mainstreaming strategy, and the projects and programmes strategy, to use the International Labour Organization's (ILO's) terms. Mainstreaming a gender viewpoint refers to the process of evaluating the effects for women and men of any action, in any area, and at any level of the organization. The mainstreaming strategy is a system-wide strategy that includes accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress, the identification and diagnosis of problems and issues, awareness that the problems and issues are not gender neutral, the will and motivation for change, and efforts to broaden women's participation in decision-making (The International Labour Organization, ILO). Gender mainstreaming can be considered a transformative strategy, which aims to transform the practices and processes of the school to eliminate gender biases and discrimination from its existing practices, traditions, and customs (Benschop & Mieke, 2011).

Although the mainstreaming strategy, when properly managed, deals with the whole organization in a fundamental and transformative way, women-specific projects and programmes are also needed to accomplish the mainstreaming. Projects and programmes contribute to solving specific problems, increase gender sensitivity, and, in general, make a gender viewpoint more visible in the school.

Gender mainstreaming is a dynamic process of change which calls for flexibility in planning and implementation, with many feedback loops to

handle the unforeseen results and developments that will occur during transformation. In line with Ely and Thomas (2001), who analysed different diversity strategies, it is suggested here that the so-called integration-and-learning perspective can be a beneficial way of supporting mainstreaming. According to this approach, the talents, viewpoints, and experiences of all organization members can provide valuable resources for success and sustainable performance. This perspective stresses on diversity as an important resource for organizational learning and change. Ely and Thomas (2001) found that when the integration-and-learning perspective was followed, people reported feeling valued and respected by other organization members. Additionally, the researchers emphasize that work practices and processes need to be designed so that they facilitate constructive intergroup conflict, and the exploration of diverse views.

Various *practices and processes* are embedded in strategies for gender equality. According to Coe et al. (2019), the barriers to gender inequality need to be recognized and changed. In practice, one important aspect of this is combining the analysis of the problems and change processes for gender equality with evidence-based, data-driven approaches based on measurable objectives and results. This could also increase the legitimacy of the issue of gender equality in the institution, because numerical facts are important in the justification, maintenance, and evaluation of changes. Furthermore, the active involvement of affected parties, and dialogue between everyone involved, tend to reduce resistance and improve commitment to the change (Benschop & Mieke, 2011).

Recruitment, promotion and career management, training and development, and appraisal and rewarding are important practical areas for gender equality. Lämsä et al. (2020, p.33) suggest that organizational initiatives, especially to support women's careers include support during breaks, the development of a family-friendly workplace, promoting women's careers (this can be done by 'blind' recruitment, by making managers and supervisors accountable for increasing the number of women in the workforce, and by monitoring wages), training and development activities, and mentoring and coaching women. Management schools could also develop stakeholder relationships with employing organizations that emphasize diversity and have practices and policies for gender equality and diversity in place.

The management school's *organizational culture* plays an important role in enabling and limiting the advance of gender equality. For the school, the ultimate aim is the achievement of durable and sustainable

cultural change, guided by the specific perspectives and needs of groups facing inequality (Coe et al., 2019). *Leadership* is a significant part of organizational culture. Leadership, which can be a specialized role based on a formal position in the school, or a process of mutual influence between organization members, is a process whereby intentional influence is exerted from one actor on other actors to guide, structure, motivate, and promote relationships and activities of the organization's members to achieve specific targets (Yukl, 2010), such as gender equality. Drawing on the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), it can be said that the role of leaders is important for change because leaders have the capacity and the potential to influence the organizational culture and its members' thinking and acting, both, as a natural occurrence, and as a planned effort. Leaders tend to be regarded as role models by others, so their behaviour shapes the ideas and behaviour of others in and around the organization. This means that a crucial part of effecting change and promoting gender equality in management schools is their leadership.

Leaders at all levels of the school send explicit and implicit messages indicating what the workplace values and prefers; for example, that the workplace appreciates gender equality and recognizes and values everyone's contributions. It is crucial that leaders, who are often men, take an active, visible, and positive role in the development of gender equality (Coe et al., 2019). Coe and colleagues stress that academic institutions that declare gender equality to be their goal need to ensure that their leaders, regardless of their gender, are competent in key areas that handle gender-related problems and promote the needed change in the school. These competencies include being aware of gender stereotypes and biases, knowing the actual state of equality or inequality in the institution from various viewpoints (including accurate metrics and statistics), having adequate social and cultural skills, and understanding realistic targets and means of change in the context in question.

## **Concluding Remarks**

Without the equal inclusion of half of the world's talent, societies will be unable to face and overcome future challenges, advance their economies, and reach the Sustainable Development Goals (2015) adopted by all United Nations member states. Building fairer and more inclusive societies and organizations is our common aim. It is the responsibility of management schools to offer younger generations of students, regardless of gender, progress in gender equality. Academic institutions such as

management schools have an important role in affecting the opportunities open to future generations, and their mindsets. These schools should be oriented to the future, to change and transformation, rather than maintaining traditions and ideas that are harmful, biased, and underplay the importance and role of women.

In this chapter, I have discussed gender equality specifically in schools of management from three perspectives. I have highlighted the global gender gap in different countries, as well as the key constructs concerning women in the context of management. I have also highlighted arguments for the career advancement of women. Finally, I have put forward a proposal for a framework that management schools could use to advance gender equality. Because the publication is targeted primarily at an Indian audience, some aspects particular to the Indian context have been discussed.

We need leadership, resources, initiatives, innovative mindsets, and practices from both, women and men, to solve the problems of inequality. Gender equality is something that advances step by step. In line with Coe et al. (2019), I conclude that the promotion of gender equality should be understood as a dynamic process that requires continuous learning, feedback, and various developmental initiatives. For management schools and for others addressing the issues all around the world, gender equality is not one specific destination, but a journey in which we all need to travel together.

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