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Keywords: *gender, women career, autoethnography, career decision making.*

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Gender in Career Decision Making by Women: An Autoethnographic Account

Himanshi Tiwari

Abstract- Career, work, job, vocation etc holds very significant meaning in one's life. The definition given by Cambridge Dictionary says that 'Career' is the *'the progress and actions taken by a person throughout a lifetime, especially those related to that person.'* A career is often composed of *'the jobs held, titles earned and work accomplished over a long period of time, rather than just referring to one position'* (British Online Dictionary 2014). Oxford Dictionary defines 'Career' as *'the job or series of jobs that you do during your working life. So it is an occupation undertaken for a significant period of a person's life and with opportunities for progress.'* Through this paper, it is intended to present a collection of reflective narratives that, taken together, explore the varied dimensions of women, gender and career in the present moment. An effort is made to use autoethnography to help gender studies' researchers, answer questions that cannot be answered by traditional, empirical research methods and to reveal voices that are obscured by aggregations of data. How this is done, however, varies widely- from an autobiographic novel to speculative fiction to rigorous academic analysis.

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I. Introduction

The rate with which Indian women are disappearing from the workplaces is an area of serious apprehension that requires sustainable and holistic intervention. No country can develop without fullest utilization of human capital. Educated or uneducated women, skilled or unskilled/semi-skilled women and young or experienced women; all have a definite place, relevance and significance in any economy. Literature suggests that work holds same significance for men and women but this might not be true for parenthood, especially in a country like India. According to a recent study conducted on forty seven companies across different sectors in India like FMCG, IT, Manufacturing, ITES, E-Commerce and Financial Services to explore gender diversity plans and policies in Indian companies, there are a good number (up to 91 %) of new mothers who aspire to come back to work (Gender Balance India Survey 2016)[1]. But out of this, a major chunk, almost 72%, have no intentions to return to their previous workplaces. The most widely quoted reasons for that are bias in expectation and performance, serious dearth of mentoring and psychological support for 'returnees/ comeback mothers'. This apprehension is also authenticated by the fact that only 26% companies have a returnee program to attract women who are on a career break. The recently amended Maternity Benefits Act has missed out the opportunity to introduce paternity leave and possibly a chance to spread the message that the responsibility of running a family should be of both the parents. India needs to think beyond the closed gender role differentiation norms prevailing in the society and take a seemingly audacious step towards Maternity and Paternity Benefits. Countries such as the UK, Singapore and Australia have introduced various categories of leaves relating to child birth, including parental leave (enabling parents to share the parental leave in the manner suitable for them), family leave etc., where both the parents receive the benefit of leaves at the time of child birth. This, to an extent, helps parents to strike a balance between their careers and personal life. Although the steps taken by the government in the recently amended Maternity Benefits Act are commendable, it may well be a case of missed opportunities in catching up with such extended requirements.

Women form an integral part of the Indian workforce be it urban or rural India. As per Census 2001, only 25.63 percent of women are actively engaged in the workforce, out of which 80 percent are involved in menial jobs in unorganised sector. In the rural areas, women are mainly involved as cultivators and agricultural labourers. (Statistics Year Book India 2015).

The current status of women in India requires a multidimensional mediation across all the levels of society, politics and economy. Meta-analyses of available literature highlight similarity among men and women with reference to confidence, risk taking capabilities and negotiation and there are enough scientific claims that support this. Despite this the story that statistics tell about the workforce participation of women. Stereotypical expectations from and by women at the time of choosing career and making career development decisions could be one of the reasons for lesser number of women in some fields or mitigated representation of women at a particular life and (or) career stage. This creates an ominous necessity for constructing plans and building unrestricted resources

[1] https://www.peoplematters.in/article/diversity/is-india-inc-doing-enough-to-move-the-needle-on-gender-diversity-14739, Retrieved on 26/02/2018

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that understand their requirements and multiply their ranges and prospects.

There are many socio-cultural stereotypes prevailing in the country with respect to parenting. Combining it with career makes it even more interesting field to research and conduct an autoethnographic study. Making career choice decisions are one of those important decisions that a person takes in his/her life. Understanding the factors that play critical role in making these decsiosns become more crucial when these are related to a woman and the limited resources available to her. Research and surveys conducted recently have indicated that balancing work and family is on the minds of college-age women long before they are married. The recent study on 3000 working moms reveals lack of childcare facilities and lack of flexibility as the top two reasons for women leaving their well started career.[2] The leaky pipeline is clearly visible at the juncture when parenthood supersedes every other aspiration of women. It could lead to a situation where girls tend to select occupations that do not completely match with her aspirations and talent and most of the time fail to move forward in her most appropriate and desired career intention.

This paper makes an effort to identify how stereotypes and other forces involved in doing gender, affected the formative process of self- concept development, and thereby played a crucial/dominant role of framing career anchors of women. Adopting autoethnographic approach both as the process as well as a product of the investigation is a well thought of decision by the author who herself is a management graduate and is involved in a very women friendly (?) or perceived to be so, profession. Precisely this paper is an autoethnographic revelation of gendered career choice and career development decisions and intends to explore the role of doing gender in career decision making. It will also emphasise upon the areas of gender doing which are still unaddressed or are by default considered to be inclusive. A critical scrutiny to bring forward a comprehensive picture is intended through this work.

II. The Backdrop

Schein's (1992)[3] 'Career Anchors' are defined as a career related concern or drive that shapes the self-concept and perception of a person and becomes a driving/motivating force that influences him/her while making career decisions. Career has both subjective and objective aspects. The subjective aspect refers to individuals' career satisfaction and job satisfaction, while the objective aspect is linked to promotions, salary and hierarchical position[4]. Prior research suggests that women prefer the subjective aspect of career to objective aspect and tend to set rather low goals in the career context[5] . Further, it has been suggested that to succeed in careers, women should prove their credentials by seeking and having more educational experiences than men[6][7] (Ng et al., 2005; Lämsä and Hiillos 2008).Besides this, at the early career phase, a dynamic process plays significant role in the way through which every individual tries to learn and adjust in the new and demanding organizational role that is aligned with his/her individual role (Chao, G.T 2012).

A well planned and well-designed intervention is quite necessary to help students/ early career people (both men & women) understand their careers effectively and to act as the mentor for other workers also in developing their own career (Canannan, G. A. 2006). The model proposed by Greenhaus et al (2000), keeps individual in the centre of the career decision making process as a driver who has to make career related decisions; and is stimulated by a need to search a career. In this process the individual sets career goals, develops strategies and work upon different schemes to succeed in his/her strategies and progress. The work of Greenhaus and Powell (2012) in the area of career introduces the term "Family-related work decision". This term was used to refer to choices related to vocations which are intensely steered by family reasons, like going for part- time work arrangements for child care or not accepting a raise in work keeping the complications of work life balance in mind (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). In 2014, Greenhaus and Kossek used a little comprehensive work–home perspective on career. This identifies the interdependencies between individuals' careers and their broader home context. It also included the family as well as the other life roles such as friendships, public and relaxation characters that a person plays in his/her life (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014). There are sound evidences in the relevant literature that indicate that women keep work life balance as a significant factor while deciding upon their career

[2] https://www.peoplematters.in/article/diversity/is-india-inc-doing-enough-to-move-the-needle-on-gender-diversity-14739, Retrieved on 26/02/2018

[3] Schein, E. H. (1992). Career anchors and job/role planning: The links between career planning and career development. . In D. H. Montross (Ed.), Career development theory and practice (pp. 207-218). Illinois: Charles C Thomas.

[4] Ng,T.W.H., Eby, L.T., Sorensen, K L., & Feldman, D.C. (2005) 'Predictors of objective and subjective career success. A meta-analysis.*Personnel Psychology*, *58*, 367–408.

[5] Abele, A.E., &Spruk, D. (2009).The longitudinal impact of self-efficacy and career goals on objective and subjective career success.*Journal of Vocational Behavior, 74*, 53–62.

[6] Ng,T.W.H., Eby, L.T., Sorensen, K L., & Feldman, D.C. (2005) 'Predictors of objective and subjective career success. A meta-analysis.*Personnel Psychology*, *58*, 367–408.

[7] Lämsä, A.-M., &Hiillos, M. (2008).Career counselling for women managers at mid-career: Developing an autobiographical approach. *Gender in Management, 23*(6), 395-408.

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choices long before they have actually entered in to family role. Research has also proven that women due to various reasons choose such career and vocations that fail to utilize their abilities and talent to the fullest. In this process they do not follow their unique career aims and objectives (Abele, A.E., & Spruk, D. 2009).

III. Theoretical Foundation & Literature Review

Since Parsons (1909) presented the first conceptual framework for understanding individuals' career decision process, a growing number of theories and models of career development and career choice have emerged. Although these models have made substantial contributions to the understanding of career decision making and career development, most theories are based on the experiences of white, middle- class males. Moreover, most career development theories also assume that individuals are free to choose from among an array of alternatives which are available to all. Thus, researchers have begun to question the relevance of these theories to women and individuals from different cultural, ethnic, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980). Many of the assumptions of career development theories ignore the social realities of special groups where career development may be constrained by such factors as prejudice, discrimination, and opportunity availability imposed by society's socio-political system (Griffith, 1980; Smith, 1983).

The model derieved out of the Social Cognitive Theory of Bandura (1986) includes personal input variables comprising personal characteristics such as gender, background/context variables comprising environmental characteristics such as parent and family influences, and learning experiences comprising variables such as objective performance, school experiences and role-modeling experiences. These variables shape and inform career-related self-efficacy (e.g, perceived task competence) and outcome expectations (e.g., anticipation of certain outcomes, such as self-satisfaction and financial reward). Self-efficacy and outcome expectations along with personal and contextual variables play an important role in the formation of interests and career goals. However, researchers have accepted the role of cultural considerations and variations in the significance of self in decision making related to valuable life decisions. Career choices is one of those important life decision that is subjected to stimuli and contemplations that are familial and collective in nature.

Review of Literature presents several theories of Career Choice and factors affecting decision making process of men and women. Yet there is a dearth of work focusing specifically to young women who are professionally qualified and are yet not contributing to the workforce.Betz and Hackett (1997) assert that both the theory and measures of career-related self-efficacy are useful both in research examining barriers to and facilitators of women's career development and for designing and evaluating the effectiveness of practice grounded in this theory. Betz and Hackett admit the challenges for a women to not to allow herself to be pushed to traditional career, but to restore options that may have been de facto removed by sexism and gender role stereotyping as well as by other environmental barriers. Overall, self-efficacy theory is thought by many to have great potential for careers work with groups who have traditionally underachieved in certain areas for example, girls, women and minority ethnic groups. One of its strengths is that it doesn't ignore biological, social or environmental influences, or the current context. However, it does assert that as individuals get older, it's more difficult to change interests, goals and performance outcomes.

From a review of a decade of research into women and career development, Phillips and Imhoff (1997) conclude that '*women's lives are complex*'. They note that the past decade has seen significant progress towards understanding this complexity. Fitzgerald et al (1995) stress the need to study concepts and variables for women (such as those identified by Betz, 1994) which were previously regarded as unnecessary and irrelevant, concluding that this will lead to a greater understanding of the vocational behaviour of everyone.

IV. Career Decision Making by Women

Theories related to women's career development began to emerge in the early 1980's (Astin, 1984; Farmer, 1985; Gottfredson, 1981; Hackett & Betz, 1981). These theories improved on earlier theories by taking into account variables which influence women's career choices, aspirations, and work behaviors. A *socio-psychological model* of career choice and work behaviour titled,' the meaning of work in women's lives' by Astin, Helen S presents a beginning formulation of a theoretical model, which draws from both empirical evidence and past theoretical formulations of career development, to enhance an understanding of women's occupational choice and behaviour. The model, which is need-based and socio-psychological, incorporates 4 constructs: motivation, expectations, sex-role socialization, and the structure of opportunity. She attempted to develop a model of career choice and work behavior that attempted to combine both personal (psychological) and social forces as well as their interaction.

It is over twenty years since scholars began to question the adequacy of the extant career theory for illuminating women's lives. However researchers like Astin (1984) have accepted this long back that women's career choices and career decision making might follow

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a completely different path as compared to their counterparts. Forrest & Mikolaitis (1986) and Gilligan (1982) have suggested that a women's identity is reflected in relational roles that she plays while connecting or differentiating with others. These authors have contributed additional considerations when looking at life roles, such as values, gender, and socialization. Connel(1987) introduces 'gender order' to refer to a historically and archeologically fabricated trend and pattern of power relations between the two broad genders men and women which can later on be institutionalised in various roles of society. Traditional gender order portrays man as the breadwinner and women as home-based caregiver or secondary earner (Gherarrdi 1995 & Poggio 2001). Interestingly when a women breaks this 'male bread winner model' and moves out the house she is automatically expected to choose a professional which is suitable forgiver type of identity of women like nurses, teachers etc (Tienariet al. 2002). Hansen (1997) has listed gender role socialization, role conflict among family/marriage and work, focus and timing of marriage, inadequate work orientation, and gender role differentiation as some of the barriers in women's career development in her Individual Leadership plan Model. Zunker (2002) defines career related decisions to be affected and taken within the boundaries of a lifelong process of identifying and integrating women's primary needs, roles, and goals within herself and her work/career and family. Having a career and family together has offered many challenges to women (Valdez & Gutek 1987) as work and family roles pose simultaneous demands to women. There is a clear trend across globe that women tend to enter the workforce in lower status, lower paying jobs which are clustered in a limited numbers of conventional careers affected by gender role discrimination and fitting best for women where she can simultaneously devote time for her caregiver roles in family. Heinset *al* (1982) believe that, "Achieving professional status may be more difficult for woman than for men" (p 455).

Domenico & Jones(2006) believe that career aspirations of women are influenced by gender based stereotypes, socioeconomic status, parent's occupation, Parent's education level and husband education and earning. Leung & Chen (2009), argue that there is significant relationship between women participation in the workforce and the environment enabling their career aspirations and ensuring progress of women's career development.

The current work is an effort to bring forward the fact that there are many talented Indian women who are missing from the workplace. The reason for that is twofold ; one is that the voice of Indian women in terms of career choices and career related decisions is still unheard (a vast gap in women specific/oriented research literature and career theories is an evidence to this belief) are second is that our workplaces have not given due considerations to the women specific expectations. The recent amendment in Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Act 2017, is an exception and a welcome step, but there is still lot more that requires to attract and retain women talent in Indian workplaces.

The amendment protects employment of women and grants 26 weeks of paid leaves (for the first two children) as compared to 12 weeks in the past. The initiative is good enough to bring back the focus on outlook towards maternity at Indian workplaces. The amendment envisions many qualitative benefits and seeks to uplift the work conditions as well as work life balance of working mothers phenomenally. It is expected that this amendment will benefit around 1.8 million working mothers, as it applies to both the private and the public sector. But is this quantitative gain enough to ensure inclusive workplaces in India? The important question that arises is the objectives that this amendment seeks to achieve. Will it be a change agent in improving gender parity at Indian workplaces? What we need is a change in the mindset towards working mothers, which is not easy in a patriarchal society like India. There is a section of corporate India like, HSBC Global, SAP Labs India, Accenture India and Make My Trip.com etc which a consciously designing gender sensitive policies. But at the same place, we have many companies where women still have to face discrimination of all forms when they move on the family way.

Indian Women are leaving the Workplace at the Fastest Rate:

Large number of women is leaving the workforce in India. There is a drop in the percentage participation of working age Indian women by 10 %. This is the largest drop in the world (ILO Report 2016). Only 27% of the female population aged over 15 is working in India. This is the lowest rate of women's participation in any workforce among the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries; with the highest in China at 64% (World Bank Report 2013).This is a jolt to the initiatives and the efforts towards gender equality at workplace. We are losing 48% of women during the transition from junior to senior positions (Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia Report 2011). Losing a woman employee in the first 7-12 years of her career is huge productivity loss to any company. Right and effective maternity policy for Indian workplaces is a need of hour. With 87th rank in Gender Equality Index we report progress on mitigating the gender gap this year in the area of salary/wage equality and across other indicators of the Educational Attainment sub index. It resulted into sealing the wide enrolment gap in primary and secondary education (World Economic Forum 2016). McKinsey Global Institute study says that by 2025 there is a possibility of increasing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India by between 16% and 60%,

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merely by facilitating female workforce participation in the economy equal to men (Abraham 2013). India will have a working age (under 30) women population of almost 250- 300 million by the year 2020. This is such a huge potential which equals to the entire population of the US or Italy, Germany, France and the UK combined (NSSO 2011). This astounding figure reveals the significant role that Indian women can play in Indian economy and business. Apart for the evidences those advocate gender equality in India and claim that this could radically add to its GDP, there are numerous arguments to support the fact that India simply can't afford to wait for gender equality at workplace.

An Inclusive and Innovative workplace for Women:

An inclusive, flexible, conducive and innovative workplace plays a significant role in harnessing the immense potential of trained/experienced women. Women workforce in India contributes 32% to the informal economy (which includes agriculture also) and 20% to the non-agriculture based jobs. Not surprisingly but a huge portion of female workforce (57%) is engaged in home based ventures (Report of Ministry of HRD 2014).

There could be several reasons for this. Some of these reasons are insufficient childcare facilities, non-conducive work environment for working mothers due to unfavorable policies, very few initiatives to help and counsel new mothers to support their trouble-free comeback, various socio-cultural stereotypes and gender role differentiation in terms of child care and parenting in India. Successful reintegration of women talent also requires metrics at the right place to measure and utilize the effects of this change in future. Indian workplaces need to work in these areas to fill the huge gender gap.

V. Research Gap

Research has indicated that balancing work and family is on the minds of college-age women even when they are unmarried This is also evident that women mostly choose those career options that allow them more time with family and create less challenges. They also see their career choices from the lenses of perceived work life balance in particular profession and prefer family or gender specific (?) jobs. There is a possibility that a girl chooses a course leading to a specific career keeping various societal pressures and pre conceived notions in mind. These gender role biases might prevent her in choosing a career that might be her true talent and also aspiration. There is a very crucial role of organization in terms of creating an employer brand or carreridentitiy that is either women friendly (?) or may too demanding and unfriendly (?). Indian society of 1980s and 1990s was a typical playfield offering very few career choices both to men and women. With the advent of technological advancement and liberalization policies of them Narsimha Rao Government the career opportunities which were previously very limited gradually expanded. Among the limited career opportunities the scope was even narrow for women. Professions like teaching, medical and nursing were listed as most nobel career options for women. There were very limited women barristers, bureaucrats, judges or journalists. In such scenario, this paper is set in the social and cultural background of India of late 1980s and 90s and intends to explore the role of doing gender in career decision making by way of autoethnographic study.

VI. Methodology

Autoethnography is a type of research that uses writing and self-examination to explore far-ranging cultural, political, and social issues through personal experience. It is a qualitative, reflexive, ethnographic method where the researcher is also the subject of inquiry (Ellis, Carolyn; Adams, Tony, Bochner & Arthur 2010). Ernst & Vallack (2015) argue in favour of autoethnography and warn the social science researchers against the possibility where individual exceptions become less important than the general trends. Caretta, Drozdzewski, Jokinen & Falconer (2016) very recently, make use of reflexivity, autobiographical writing, and reflection, to analyse increasingly stressful and demanding working conditions of early academicians.

Adopting autoethnographic approach both as the process as well as a product of the investigation is a well thought of decision by the author who herself is a management graduate and is involved in a very women friendly (?) or perceived to be so, profession. By using autoethnography as the research method, this paper intends to investigate aspects of doing gender in career decision making. Starting with a reflective examination of myself as the author and gender as one of the factors in the process of my career related decision making, the aim is to investigate questions of culture, social norms, gender stereotypes, familial influences, self-concept and identity. During the course of data collection for two of my papers; one related to identifying (using narrative enquiry) career anchors of educated women who are not participating in the workforce, and other seeking to explore male member's (of the family) intercession in the career choice decisions of management graduates (who have shared their career autobiographies with the author and are pursuing a particular stream of education), I came across the singularity of some cultural, social and economic phenomenon in career decision making of women. While conducting narrative enquiry of the in-depth interviews of these women the author came across with the possibility of involving herself as a subject due to the similarity of incidents/anchors/

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motivators (de-motivators) and frequency of occurrence of these incidents/anchors in her own life.

a) An Autobiographical Account

"I was born as second girl child of well-educated parents whose thought process and life style was much ahead of their time. Four of us were living in a pseudo nuclear family. It was a pseudo nuclear family as my grandparents were living in the same building which was a huge premise encompassing the families of two of my uncles as well. It was a trier III city which had enjoyed as well as suffered the locational advantage and disadvantage of being very nearby to the capital of the State."

"One of my uncles had three girls and another had a son as the only child. In total we were seven cousins living almost together."

"My mother was the only daughter in law in the family who was working and was also been respected for the high education that she possessed."

"A confident working mother and a supporting husband who was not only proud of her wife's dedication towards career but was also the strongest supporter pillar of her aspirations and successes was the natural environment in my family."

"Attaining Education and aspiring for a Career was inbuilt in my DNA. Gender was not at all the guiding force in my family till I reached to my graduation days."

"We played all sorts of sports I had not encountered the episodes of 'doing gender in my family till then.

b) A tomboy or a Girly girl

"Without a single deliberate effort by my parents or me, I grew up, to know that my cousins use to reiterate my identity as a tomboyish person and my elder sister as a girly girl."

"All I knew was that I was a go-getter, bold, confident and outspoken girl and so was my sister with a bit of shyness and a bit of less opinionated identity. She was also a confident and extrovert person; thanks to the upbringing given by our parents!"

c) Making a Career Choice decision

"I remember it was summers of 1998, and I was about to finish my last year of graduation, when I received the call letter from Indian Institute of Mass Communication, for appearing in an interview to get admission in Masters of Journalism."

"If I get admission there it was going to be the beginning of a new life for me. A life full of adventure, passion and unpredictable working life with lesser scope for family time and work life balance. (This was my way of thinking and my perception about journalism as a career in India)."

"Off course I filled up the form, off course I had prepared for it, off course it was one of the finest places in the country to pursue such course."

"Then what was bothering me. A tomboyish girl who was bold enough to travel frequently from her home town to the nearby city Lucknow; was appreciated from her writing and speaking skills and had also represented her university at the State level Debate competition (which required staying at a far off hostel at Hyderabad for four days) was thinking the way quite unlikely of her".

"Something was bothering me."

"I had anticipated a much predictable career and a much routine working life for me."

"Who was this new version of mine?"

"Was it really new, or was it just hidden from me and I was till then not aware of my true self- image.

"It was strange to get along with this unknown self-identity."

d) Am I Cut for Journalism?

Despite being able to cross a very small hurdle in my way to get admission in the course of Journalism, I simply let it go and convinced myself that it must not have been an appropriate field for me."

"What is that appropriate field? Who will decide the degree and criterion for appropriateness?"

"My parents neither encouraged nor motivated me to take choose journalism as my career"

"They were as neutral as possible."

"Where from this feeling and self -belief that journalism is an over demanding field which expects more than what I have in store to offer to my career creped in me.

e) Choosing an Appropriate (?)Career

"During my post-graduation days the most certainly available career path for me was of a HR person owing to my training as Masters of Human Resource Management & Industrial Relations."

"From no-where the idea of appearing for a National Eligibility Test for Lecturer ship came to me and I qualified the coveted exam in my first attempt."

"By the year 2001, I was a management graduate, working as a monitoring and evaluation consultant in one of the leading NGO of Lucknow and was busy in my usual working life.

"Then one fine day the qualifying certificate which proved to be my gate pass to the world of higher education and becoming an academician, arrived at my home."

"I could read the happiness and comfort in the voice of my parents when they informed the news to me on my office's landline phone (mobiles were not the usual way of communication then)."

"Oh; so this was that most appropriate career for me."

"Was I cut for becoming a professor?"

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"Am I?"

"Does this career guarantee the work life balance that is one of the crucial conditions for me from my working life?"

"Am I unknowingly following the path that my mother walked?"

"Am I treating her as my role model?"

"I did not actually know that at that time."

"Is teaching a really Flexible Job?"

"Or is it one of those most appropriate careers for a woman?"

f) It is definitely not as easy as I thought?

As a person I never became the victim of gender role differentiation. I was never told to do something or not do something just because I fall in to a particular biological category of sex. I have never seen such environment in my family where cooking cleaning etc. is a 'women only' job and earning or bread winning is a 'male only' domain. That means I have never faced a 'second or third party gender doing.' Then who instigated my decision to choose a so called women friendly career. Was it the societal, familial and cultural environment that very subtly has played its role or was it my perception towards specific careers and certain degree of perceived scope of work life balance associated with these careers? Or was it my intentionally made decision to choose a career where the scope of autonomy, flexibility and work life balance is one higher side.

One thing was clear. Work life balance was my dominant career anchor (Schein 2012). Finding out the role of gender role differentiation and gender doing in framing this particular career anchor is the arena where future research is possible while using the same autobiographical and ethnographic approach. As present study intends to take only career choice into its purview of exploration, the life story is depicted only up-to the phase when the author has made her career choice decision. Challenges in the way of career development and growth is another field of study that might get affected with gender role differentiation and gender doing once the author has played another life roles of a wife and mother. Latest studies and surveys have strikingly mentioned that that it is the most demanding phase in a women's professional and personal life and the pipeline is quite leaky there.

VII. Theoretical Contribution

Precisely it explores the role of doing gender in career decision making of women. Autoethnography is a method of research that involves describing and analysing personal experiences in order to understand cultural experiences. The method challenges canonical ways of doing research and recognizes how personal experience influences the research process. Autoethnography acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research. This paper also makes an effort to provide a historical and conceptual overview of autoethnography. The reasons for coming to autoethnography for exploring gendered career decision making by women and identify key concerns and considerations that led to the use of this method are good enough. This paper is both product and process of autoethnography for collecting evidences of doing gender in career decision making of women. All of the pieces of narratives in this paper share some characteristics: Each one is the result of a rigorous examination of the self and lived experience, and each one moves between the subjective and the cultural in its analysis.

VIII. Managerial Implication

Women form an integral part of the Indian workforce. Gender Equality is one of the ambitious goals under Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Researchers have noted that understanding differences among women is critical for crafting policy and making public investments that meet their needs and expand their choices and opportunities. The autoethnographic revelations of realities of challenges and anchors of career decision making by women might be a key contributor towards framing more sustainable and future oriented workplace policies and practices. A sincere effort towards hearing the voice of women and including them in the process of decision making is the need of hour. Without which the real concerns, true stories, deep pains and moments of ultimate joy will remain unnoticed and unaccounted.

To make our workplaces more inclusive and sustainable is the need of hour and should be the prime focus of our policy makers. Corporate world needs to take this issue far more seriously than ever. In today's world of war for Talent India Inc. cannot afford to miss even a single trained worker to be out of the workforce. The expenditure done on training women engineers, doctors, and managers etc will be utter waste if we fail to create a suitable match between their life roles and career expectations. Gender role differentiation has done enough harm to our economic and societal wellbeing and this is the time to challenge it with full force and right intentions. More researches and in-depth analyses in this area and more explorations to hear ' Her' voice in the world of education and career can reap the desired results in coming future. There is a lot more scope in this field for more qualitative as well as quantitative studies and empirical future researches.

Notes

1. Although I treat this autoethnography as "my" story, I needto confess and admit that my parents, elder sister and cousins are also the writers" of this story.

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I have intentionally used the principal individual particular to elude communicating for them, but I want to concede their full contribution in constructing my life story the way it is.

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