

# Women and Leadership: Changes and Challenges Faced by 'Second Sex'

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**Abstract**—Museums have long been associated as the citadels for heritage conservation and instruments for knowledge dispersion. Today, they are part of a fully-fledged industry opening up new vistas of job opportunities in the form of museum authors, humanitarians, collectors, conservators, museologist, historians, storytellers, curators and volunteers. This is one field where women constitute almost half of the workforce. The finding of “Bureau of labor statistics” is that less than 50 percent female are working in museums. Though it seems to be a pink-collar job, the pay equity and promotion issues are by large against ‘the second sex’. Color of women adds to the problem of gender bias universally. This paper attempts to look at and analyse the work/life awkwardness that obstructs ladies' lives working in the museums like poor or non-existent medical coverage, combined with unpaid family leave, that impact women as well as their families. By what method would museums be able to make even handed programming and presentations or comprehensive accumulations, shall be delved into, to fix gender sensitivity issue in this paper. “Museums Association (MA), set up an Equal Opportunities Committee in 1989 (Roberts 1992) and published discussions of the issues in *Museums Journal* (MJ 1998;1990) as per Turner in, *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* (Turner, V.,2002.)” This paper shall attempt to understand the gender issues prevalent in this vocation and try to suggest ways in making this pink-collar job a counterpart of white-collar job through right recognition of its importance and improvising its presence as an industry for women.

**Keywords:** Gender inequality, Pay Equity, Museum vocation.

## Introduction

Gender bias has influenced work culture in museums worldwide since its very inception. Innumerable women constitute of the workforce in museums, yet the culture there has not changed much. In the aforementioned profession, in spite of more females working, male employees still dominate various areas of the museum like curatorship or directorship, which is consider to be the most responsible job. Women are not at all voiced, and there is still disparity in pay and access to career advancement opportunities for them. It will take a firm and far reaching methodology to change museum practices towards more noteworthy gender orientation value.

Now is the perfect time to restore the balance of power between genders. Museum educators and curators are well-situated to lead this development. This paper means to segregate the reasons influencing women's success in museum profession and ascertain as to via which method will we be able to best handle this issue? The “Maggie Blake's (Turner, v. (2002) who conducted research in 1993 looked at the reasons as to why”,

There is difficulty in balancing the role of being a family person and work expectations.

Differences in mental orientations according to gender.,

Working culture of museums with no flexibility of timing.

The status of Gender equality is not given appropriate priority.

Lack of interest in women wanting to become museum managers.

Stressing on “Positive Strategies “to be inculcated into work culture, some of the key points:

- The implementation of flexible timing according to the women employee.
- “Training, support systems – role models, monitoring, networking and career planning – and positive action (ibid)”, (Turner, v. (2002).

There are still women who have been able to successfully either break the ceiling of bias or at least reach it through awareness. These are the soaring Directors, curators, art conservators, archaeologist, art historians and artists. As far as roles, pay scale and fame are concerned; some of them are doing very well. But mostly women fill jobs which fulfil various other responsibilities inside the museum, to help with visitors' queries, individual attention in terms of visitor from foreign or friend acknowledgment. Some may be best accomplished in a position which, might define and meet the requirements of being the top most level executives or successful women in Museum in real sense. In thinking about the situation of women by and large, in any case, it is difficult

to quantify accomplishment by anything besides the most significant achievements. The achievements could be in terms of them having reached the top positions of being the Director, curators or managers, having a prestigious job as compared to other female counterparts in family, being able to earn or any other fulfilment of personal ambitions. But when compared to their male counterparts, success rate gets marginal. The time has come to find out if there is any truth also in women achieving success and if there is, then to what extent.

### Gender Break at unequal epithet in museum profession

Women comprise the majority of museum employees, but in most cases, they earn less than their male colleagues. Reason behind is:

A-The administrative environment and rules of museums, which is often conventional and time bound.

B-Striking a balance between work and home.

C-Women have taken big steps towards equality in society, but wide-spread bias still exists.

D- Women stay silent to secure her job.

E- Women are less negotiating when it comes to salary negotiation. They are most of the time not prepared for asking different compensation. They generally negotiate about health benefits and after retirement plans.

### The directorship in museum: male vs female

Museum Directors are also addressed as curators. They are responsible for administrative as well as supervision job in the museum buildings. It is highly demanding position; the director is responsible for spreading awareness about our culture to the community. Expert in the subject, they also teach students from the same profession and plan for yearly educational programmes for the visitors. Director of the museum is an expert of all gallery objects and collections. They must be fully trained to undertake any task and handle the overall responsibility of museum and its staff. Fundraising for the museum is also considered to be the responsibility of directors, organizing meetings, arranging seminars are part of this program, regular updates and follow-ups required and the director has to be observant all the time. If we compare between the male and female directorship in the museum, we get some data from the survey and studies done by different organizations about the factors which is affecting women's position in the museum.

Victoria turner has talked about the components of affecting women's achievement in museum. She reveals that in the year 1988 museum data base project (MDP) said that 87% male staff works in museum while, in the year 1993 Museum training institute(MIT)declared that the number of male and female employees in museum are equal and it was supported by Cultural heritage National training organization (CHINTO)in the year 1999. Museum Yearbook in the year

2001 done the survey and data declares that 61%males are in the higher position at museums, so the gap is existing. Likewise, Association of Art Museum Director in its survey said that less than 50% women holding the position of directors with the less salary in comparison to male directors. In the recent time The American Alliance of museums in the year 2012 declared that 57.2% of directors are female. Again In 2014 The Association of Art museum (AAM) released the report that 24% women lag behind male for higher position(Turner, V.,2002).

### Data about women's success rate in the museum

Organization/year	Male	Female
Museum data base project(MDP)/1988	87%	13%
Museum training institute(MIT)/1993	50%	50%
Cultural Heritage National Training organization (CHINTO)/1999	50%	50%
Museum yearbook(MA)/2001	61%	39%
Association of Art Museum Director(AAMD)	-	Less than 50%
The American Alliance of Museums(AAM)/2012	42.80%	52%
Association of Art Museum(AAMD)/2014	76%	24%

### Current status of female salaries in museum

"There is a strong tendency for women to be employed at lower salaries than their male counterparts"(Prince 1988). In the year 1989 it was declared that females are paid less paygrade(Turner, V.,2002).

"Museums are famously a low-pay sector," admits the outgoing director of the Museum Association, **Mark Taylor**. Discussions and meeting are regularly arranged by the higher authority worldwide and hopes are there that this issue will resolve with the time in collaboration with government and experts and museum leaders. Women are getting directorship and working equally with male members in the museum but in spite of that, they get less salary additionally with the time women opt for part time job because of childcare, therefore getting half salary and still there are lots of pressure. Unfortunately, many of them have to loosen their job because of no option of part time.

### The Challenges

For any working couple planning to raise kids, certain troubles ensue which include a significant upsurge to the responsibility of ladies, and is the most evident reason for their burdened circumstance in the work environment: "The motivation behind why ladies still lose at work is straightforward: they have kids at home. Obviously, men have kids as well, however it doesn't make a difference much" — while for ladies, it is important. Because of this circumstance, several women settle on the decision to avoid taking on the responsibility of home, since the prospects of a settled job rank higher psychologically. The result of this step is not rosy, rather it can adapt into challenges of balancing between meeting the

expectations of both the role and end up under broad strain and stress.

Women try to balance both the responsibilities perfectly and then suffer work wise as well as health wise. She neglects herself and then feel tired and exhausted all the time. Officially when she gains good experience and it is her time for promotion or hike in salary, she is again confused between starting a family. So she never reaches the position she deserves.

Museum now have become a full-fledged industry paving way to job opportunities for many, hence today, we find managers generally belonging to other private sector organizations previously are now managing museums. Their organizational culture today colors the ethos of museums.

Hence brief outline of the challenges faced by women could be underlined as below:

- Marriage and family pressures conflicting with the working hours.
- Insensitivity of male peers and superiors towards gender problems
- Pay Gap between male-female

#### **How to Overcome the Challenges**

The problems outlined above are not exclusive to Museums alone, rather these are universal issues faced by every woman who decides to step out and carve their work into a career.

But Museum as a place to work could be more conducive for women as educational institutes are. Ultimately museums are the harbingers of education in a more practical manner. What could be better way to teach history than archeological findings, or to teach science, it could be science museums, no doubt, it's a proven fact that women can be the best nurtures and teachers for young children. The museums, being practical teaching institutions could utilize women as workforce in not only making education more experiential and interesting, but also initiate a change in the society by imbibing right values in a conducive manner. They are the best guides and storytellers for school kids and young children.

Some of the things that could be initiated by the museums and government may change the scene for women.

- Working hours could be flexible for women without compromising with the time to be given to the employees. For e.g. some could take up morning hours while some could take up afternoon shift. Works like documentation or the like could be allowed with the prospective of 'Work from Home' system.
- Gender sensitization initiatives could be taken to bring a change in mindset.
- Equal work-equal pay policy could be strictly enforced by the authorities.

- Flexible time, less demanding job and less travelling must be added to her job profile, as it is a universal truth that women need to take care of her kids and family time to time
- Time to time museum organize exhibition and conferences additionally they need to look after the visitors on the regular basis. The organization can divide the responsibility according to the time. Exhibition arrangement takes a lot of time and hard work, so male employee can devote time there and women can take over the interaction with visitors.

#### **Conclusion**

Family responsibility is the single biggest issue, when the degree of commitment is expanded, as shockingly it remains the case that expansive number of females, as opposed to the opposite gender, take up majority of the weight of responsibility of household, hence likely to come across the pessimistic frame of mind at working environment, particularly with in the more hierarchical culture .Sex discrimination Act in 1975(SDA) was responsible for gender equality in most of the organization who apply this policy. Slow changes were observed in last the last five to seven years. The data also provide little degree of improvement. Knowledge and qualification wise there are no issue, only the social issue like starting a family or no flexibility in time causing the main effect. In few cases museum employee is hired with the help of consultant, and the conditions are strictly mentioned that museum needs a hard-working employee, with full dedication. Museum profession is very feminist with more and more women in almost all areas. But still it is a long way to go. It is required to raise the awareness by the one who have been bestowed with the appropriate authority, are willing to see the positive changes, courage and influence to bring about the necessary facelift in the existing scheme of work culture across museums and believe in Gender Equality. So that together we as museum family can declare the victory. Good news is that the women directors of present time is currently thinking of positive changes for women in museum, they are also supportive for flexible timing but with conditions. Awareness for gender equality is higher worldwide, likewise social media also moving with this awareness drive. They do not hesitate to share about biasness and talk openly how the profession with more women is discriminating her. As a museum employee it is our responsibility also to work on this area and try to include maximum people. Every country needs to step out equally. World knows the challenges women are facing and trying to finish it also, but it seems to be a slow process.

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