

# Women empowerment leading to Organizational development-Role played by Feminist Ethics & Smartphone

**Shashank Goel<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Prateek Gupta<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> *Department of Management studies, Centre For Management Development (INDIA)*

<sup>2</sup> *Department of Management studies, KIET Group of Institutions (INDIA)*

## **Abstract**

*Women empowerment is the buzz word throughout the world today. Women are being empowered through various governmental and non-governmental initiatives to excel in organizational sector of their choice. Due to these women empowerment initiatives women have acquired good positions in different sector of organizations and are contributing at optimum levels leading to organizational development. Also, Women are no more disconnected with the technology as was in the past. They have adapted themselves to the environmental needs and are connected to the world through technologically advanced telecommunication devices such as smartphone which has equipped them with multiple capabilities that make them independent and self-dependent. Feminist ethics have played a very important role in bringing about the desired change in the situation of women in the world. Present paper is drafted to study the role played by feminist ethics and smartphone adoption by women and this correspondingly leading to organizational development.*

**Keywords:** *Feminist, Ethics, Smartphone, organizational, development, women, empowerment.*

## **1. Introduction to Feminist Ethics**

Feminist Ethics is defined as an attempt to revise, reformulate, or rethink traditional ethics to the extent it depreciates or devalues women's moral experience. According to the Feminist philosopher Alison Jaggar, traditional ethics that are responsible for letting women down in five related ways are as enumerated. Firstly, Traditional ethics have less concern for women as opposed to men's issues and interests. Second, traditional ethics views as trivial the moral issues that arise in the so-called private world, the realm in which women do housework and take care of children, the infirm, and the elderly. Third, it implies that, in general, women are not as morally mature or deep as men. Fourth, traditional ethics overrates culturally masculine traits like “independence, autonomy, intellect, will, wariness, hierarchy, domination, culture, transcendence, product, asceticism, war, and death,” while it underrates culturally feminine traits like “interdependence, community, connection, sharing, emotion, body, trust, absence of hierarchy, nature,

immanence, process, joy, peace, and life.” Fifth, and finally, it favors “male” ways of moral reasoning that emphasize rules, rights, universality, and impartiality over “female” ways of moral reasoning that emphasize relationships, responsibilities, particularity, and partiality (Jaggar, “Feminist Ethics,” 1992). Feminist ethics is defined an approach to ethics that builds on the belief that traditionally ethical theorizing has under-valued and/or under-appreciated women’s moral experience and it therefore chooses to reimagine ethics through a holistic feminist approach to transform it ( (Tong, R. and Williams N.,1998). Feminist ethics have reformulated ethics that enhances the status of women in society and empowers them to adapt to change and acquire positions in different organization and contribute to the overall organizational development.

## **2. Role of Feminist ethics and smartphone in women empowerment leading to organizational development**

Feminist ethics have played a phenomenal role in women empowerment through the adoption of smartphone by women leading to organizational development. In the past, based on the traditional ethics women were involved only in the household work such as looking after the house, taking care of children and elders. Majority of their time was spent in house and they were hardly connected with the world. Also, their involvement with the technology was minimum. Feminist ethics transformed the traditional ethics which brought about the tremendous change in the status of women in the society. It is because of the feminist ethics that the world and women herself realized that they are in no way lesser than men. As a result, initiatives were taken to empower women and women started participating in activities outside their household. The adoption of smartphone by women really empowered them to enhance and update their knowledge, to remain connected to the world through social networking sites and telecommunication, to learn new things over the internet, to conduct online financial transactions, to transact other business and organizational transactions and at the most to become independent and self-dependent without a need to depend on others specially males.

Women empowerment led to increased participation of women in organizational activities where they broke the glass ceiling by proving that they are no lesser than males. The women leadership and their style of administering the organizational activities following the ethics of care lead to the organizational development and growth. Feminist ethics enabled women to acquire top positions in organizations and prove their capability through outstanding results that led to organizational development and growth. Many women started their own startups and businesses and took them to heights. Thus, we can note that feminist ethics and smartphone together have brought about a positive change in the situation of women in the world.

### 3. Literature Review

The research studies, where researchers focused on women empowerment are as following:

In a research study on “Role of Information Technology in Women Empowerment” Anjum Bimal and Tiwari Rajesh (2012) discussed about the strengths of IT, the opportunities it has generated and the role IT played in empowering women.

In their study on “Smartphones – smartly transforming India” Goel Shashank and Gupta Prateek (2017) concluded that the wide usage of smartphones has greatly enhanced the overall technical abilities of all. Smartphone applications have empowered people technically, transforming their life.

In a research study on “Role of smartphone in women empowerment” Goel Shashank and Gupta Prateek (2018) concluded that smartphone play a significant role in empowering women and smartphone usage has brought about a positive change in the life of women.

In a post-doctoral report by Bhattacharya Mausumi, on “Mobile Phone: A new tool to empower rural women in India with special reference to Bolpur-Santiniketan” concluded that the use of modern-day technology in the form of mobile phones initiates not only economic independence of rural women in India but also assist in their social and psychological growth. Her report indicated that the use of mobile phones helps the self-employed women in their organizational tasks which in turn also determine the level of empowerment of rural women in India with special reference to Bolpur- Sriniketan division.

In the research paper on, "Women Empowerment: Role of New Media" Khan Ehtesham Ahmad and Moin Arif (2013) concludes that the emergence and acceptance of new media (internet) has led to empowerment of women which has also led to the development of the family, community, society, state and the nation and highlighted the positive perception and use of new media as a development tool to empower women.

In an article on “The Role of ICT in Women’s Empowerment in Rural Bangladesh”, Laizu Zebunnessa, Armarego Jocelyn and Sudweeks Fay (2010) described that the women with ICT skills are found to have a higher degree of confidence level, more self-esteem, self-awareness and dignity and a feeling of independence than their counterparts. ICT awareness among women can bring about a positive change in socio-cultural behavior towards women.

In an honors thesis on ” The Impact of Mobile Phones on the Status of Women in India” Lee Dayoung (2009) made efforts to find out the impact of mobile phones on the status of women in India. He concluded from the study that mobile phones significantly decrease both men and women’s tolerance for domestic violence, increase women’s autonomy in mobility and economic independence, but do not find significant effects on child preferences and other measures of autonomy. On the basis of his study he

suggested that the Government of India and those of other countries should consider mobile phones as a policy instrument for empowering women.

In a research paper on “A Mobile Based Women Safety Application (I Safe Apps)” Mandapati Sridhar, Pamidi Sravya, Ambati Sriharitha (2015) concluded that the mobile application I Safe is very much helpful for any woman and can be easily used by the women when in danger position to alert her family members and other guardians in her list by sending them the message and location details of the women so that the safety of the women can be ensured.

In the research paper on, “Women Empowerment Through Access to Information (Ati): The Strategic Roles Of Non-Governmental Organizations In Nigeria” Oyelude Adetoun A. & Bamigbola Alice A. (2012) concluded that NGO’s are playing an important role in empowering women by educating them to work with new technologies such as I-pads, Smartphone to access information.

In a research paper published by Padmini. Chattu, Salamuddeen. SK, Janardhan. Ummadi, S. Suresh Babu (2013) on “Empowering Rural Women through Mobile Technology” have found that the mobile technology is transforming the life of women for better in varieties of ways across the India. Women are using mobiles not only for communicating with others but also in various other ways such as for safety in times of difficulty, as a media connector with current updates in day to day life and as an e-learning device to become literate and enhance knowledge.

In an article on “Google’s Internet Saathi programme: How rural women are transforming communities” Rathi Nandini (2017) describes about the Internet saathi a joint programme launched by Google in association with Tata Trusts to bridge the digital literacy gaps and empower women especially rural women since it came into operation in July 2015. She concludes in her article that this joint effort of goggle and Tata Trusts has greatly benefited in empowering women digitally through Smartphone.

#### **4. Objective of study**

The objectives of the present study are as mentioned below:

- To study the role of Feminist ethics in women empowerment leading to organizational development.
- To study the role of smartphone in women empowerment leading to organizational development.

#### **5. Research Methodology**

The present research is descriptive in nature. The Questionnaire was designed for the survey study. Thereafter, questionnaires were distributed both through online and offline mode for the collection of

data. Out of the filled questionnaires 483 were found to be valid. Convenient sampling method was employed for sample selection. The sample was collected from working women possessing Smartphone.

## 6. Data Analysis and Findings

The demographic data collected from 483 valid questionnaire relating to age, marital status and occupations are presented in tables below:

From the Table 1 it may be noted that the majority of women i.e. 64.8% who participated in the survey were lying in the age group of 20-30 years.

<b>Table 1: Working women age wise</b>				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30	313	64.8	64.8
	30-40	146	30.2	95.0
	40-50	24	5.0	100.0
	Total	483	100.0	

From the Table 2 it may be noted that the majority of women i.e. 56.7% who participated in the survey were married.

<b>Table 2: Working women Marital status</b>				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	274	56.7	56.7
	Unmarried	209	43.3	100.0
	Total	483	100.0	

From the Table 3 it may be noted that the majority of women i.e. 42.7% who participated in the survey were working in service organizations.

<b>Table 3: Working Women Occupational status</b>				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Service	206	42.7	42.7
	Business	63	13.0	55.7
	Entrepreneurship	31	6.4	62.1
	Professional	183	37.9	100.0
	Total	483	100.0	

From the Table 4 it may be noted that the majority of women i.e. 98.6% who participated in the survey possess and use smartphone in day to day and organizational work.

<b>Table 4: working women possessing smartphone</b>				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	476	98.6	98.6
	No	7	1.4	100.0
	Total	483	100.0	

On Data analysis it was further found that out of all the women surveyed, 90% of the working women believe that feminist ethics have really empowered them by transforming the traditional ethics and it is because of it that they are able to do the occupation of their choice and 100% of the working women possessing smartphone agree that smartphone has become an important part of their life and has really empowered them to do organizational and other personal tasks easily.

## 7. Conclusion

It may be concluded from the study that the feminist ethics and smartphone are together playing a very important role in not only empowering women but also leading to organizational development through women participation in organizational decision making. The revision and reformulation of the traditional ethics has enabled women to brought about a change in their situation which has enhanced not only their own personal life but also led to the development of the society as a whole. The women leadership in

organizations have led to the organizational development and growth. Feminist ethics have made the women to come forward to contribute in building the nation by fulfilling a big role in organizations they are associated with and succeed in their goals. Smartphone as a technological device has empowered them by adding on to their capabilities to perform various tasks easily leading to self development and organizational development.

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