

Problem Face by the Corporate Women Leaders with Special Reference to “Queen Bee Syndrome”

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Abstract

There should be always healthy competition at the workplace. It is a very good sign, but pulling someone down to achieve what you want will create bad environment in the office. It is the duty of the one who is at a managerial position to motivate those under him to do better and set higher goals to reach point of success. Some woman has the syndrome usually holds a position of power at the workplace. But even if she has the power, she feels threatened by the progress of other female subordinates and tries to pull them down. There are actually many female bosses who exhibit this attitude. This is the reason many women dread having a female as boss or manager.

Defining it: The term queen bee syndrome applies to a woman who feels threatened by the progress of her female subordinates. To stop their progress she indulges in pulling them down by criticizing their work and by monitoring their work through a microscopic view.

Understanding the Queen Bee Syndrome

Queen bee is the 'queen' of the beehive. The beehive in this context is the workplace and the 'queen bee' is the female boss or someone who holds a controlling and higher rank.

People with the queen bee syndrome are always there at a workplace and it concerns women (queens!). The woman shows the typical alpha male characteristics - dominant, ambitious, result oriented, and somewhat insecure about people threatening her progress.

In this research paper researcher explain the Queen bee syndrome. Reasons Behind the behavior like queen bee. What women can do to become good managers and get rid of queen bee syndrome? What organizations can do to minimize queen bee syndrome?

KEYWORDS Women Leadership, Work place , Queen bee syndrome, dominant, ambitious, result oriented, insecure .

Introduction

Now in India women are having good educational background but there is still a scarcity of women leadership in large companies. There are many reasons for why very less number of women are found in leadership positions and large number of women are still working at the middle management level. It has been seen that women always suffer the problems while advancing in the career, the obstacles like lack of education, lack of training, lack of experience, family obligations, gender bias in promotions, prejudiced managers, Insufficient personal contacts, men value dominate corporate culture. Etc.

Up till now it was the common belief that men are perpetrators of gender discrimination and women are the victims of it. But recently, researchers have found shocking evidence that women themselves also play a crucial role in maintaining their position within organizations, as they tend to see each woman as rivals. These successful women cause the stereotyping of other women and in this way diminish their chances to become successful. This tendency of women is known as QUEEN BEE SYNDROME.

The woman at top having queen bee syndrome shows the typical alpha male characteristics - dominant, ambitious, result oriented, and somewhat insecure about people threatening her progress. Such a female can be called an alpha female or queen bee.

Understanding the Queen Bee Syndrome

Defining the queen bee syndrome: The term queen bee syndrome applies to a woman who feels threatened by the progress of her female subordinates. To stop their progress she indulges in pulling them down by criticizing their work and by monitoring their work through a microscopic view.

Queen bee is the 'queen' of the beehive. The beehive in this context is the workplace and the 'queen bee' is the female boss or someone who holds a controlling and higher rank. Healthy competition at the workplace is a very good sign but indulging in pulling someone down to achieve what you want is worst! It is the duty of the one who is at a managerial position to motivate those under him to do better and set higher goals to reach pinnacle of success. As mentioned earlier, the woman who has this syndrome usually holds a position of power at the workplace. But even if she has the power, she feels threatened by the progress of other female subordinates and tries to pull them down. There are actually many female bosses who exhibit this attitude. This is the reason many women dread having a female as boss or manager. This behaviour also hampers the professional environment of the workplace to a great extent. Many surveys and studies were conducted found that some women do have a 'hard corner' for their junior female workers. They will be more critical of their female subordinates and would monitor their work more stringently. After doing many studies, it was thought that this might be the reason why women find it stressful to work under their female bosses. The survey says it all - In a survey that asked about from which gender you would want your boss to be - three quarters of men responded to prefer a male boss. Many working women had reported they feel threatened to have a female boss and have felt undermined at work.

Women that have Queen Bee Syndrome engage in negative behaviours towards the females that they supervise and this can even escalate to verbal abuse or harassment. They purposely hold other women down so they can remain in control of their own situation. Anyone with good ideas will be ignored or worse yet, singled out for attack by the Queen Bee. No one can be as smart as the Queen Bee and any potential contributions to help benefit the company will be shot down before they are given a fair chance at being heard.

The Queen Bee does not put the company first and certainly does not think of the "hive". Her only concern is staying on top and in control so her own life can seem more important and fulfilled. Unfortunately this type of behaviour not only makes women look bad but also holds us back as a whole. Queen Bee Syndrome is common

and can be observed in many organizations. On a serious note, having a female boss who shows the queen bee syndrome could be really detrimental to the progress of the female subordinates. The woman with the syndrome takes all the effort to pull down her female junior workers and makes their life hell. Such unwanted behaviour can hamper the organization and women subordinates also.

When women struggle to reach the top position in organization they have to go through number of problems because of gender bias and they can only be the person who can understand the problems of subordinate women better than anybody else. In such case what can be the reasons behind their negative behaviour towards their own gender colleague? Why they become so reluctant to their female subordinate's progress and never helps them to achieve higher positions in organization? Following are some reasons behind the Queen Bee behaviour of the women at the top.

Reasons Behind the behaviour like queen bee.

- To explain the queen bee syndrome, it has been argued that those women who have risen to the managerial level and have acquired leadership positions in male-dominated organizations are motivated to maintain the organizational culture that allowed them to be successful in their careers.
- As men have a more traditional view of the women's role in society they do not see them as rivals, or compete with them for job openings. Those females who do reach a senior managerial position need to exhibit male assertiveness characteristics in order to meet the expectations in their role. As a result, senior women often find themselves competing against other females in order to maintain their scarce (top) position, and therefore behave negatively towards them, rather than supportive.
- Furthermore, some women like being the sole representatives of their gender at the top of their organizations. It gives them a cachet among their male colleagues, which would be diluted by the arrival of more women.
- Some time women at the top feel that, since they got to the top, despite the obstacles, they are under no obligation to make the climb easier for other women.
- These successful women perceive themselves as unique group members, because it still is exceptional for women to occupy leadership positions in male dominated organizations. As a result they will distance themselves from other women who are not able to climb up the organizational ladder and start to behave in a manner consistent with the queen bee syndrome.
- Some research studies also believe that women tend to become harsh at their juniors to avoid the accusation of favouring women under them.

- In some cases, women who reach the top, try to manage like men, yet it doesn't work as well for them. Men can behave in a way found unacceptable in women. Loud, public directives from the female boss are often interpreted as nasty or offensive. For men, this is not always the case. Perhaps this is because women are expected to be more maternal and interact on a more personal and intimate level.
- Women are also trained from an early age to believe that they are valued for being young and attractive. Once they're not youthfully attractive, they fear being replaced by someone younger, smarter or whatever the perceived competition of the moment seems to be. Men don't have this same fear. There are a lot of older men in top positions who are considered at the top of their game.
- While being the only woman in a male-dominated field may give a sense of pride, it can thus also create a lonely existence. Especially when these women work in a male-dominated environment. They then also suffer from discrimination, domineering and aggressive behaviour.

Queen bee syndrome can never be justified. In cases where the female boss are too harsh for women subordinates, subordinate may feel sick and quit work. It questions the term sisterhood and the belief that women would make better bosses than men. Women are known to be emphatic and understanding and they should stick to it rather than indulging in a bad and cruel attitude. This ruthless and cunning attitude of women at the workplace is something that needs to be addressed.

So, how can we combat Queen Bee Syndrome? The best way to beat Queen Bee Syndrome is to counteract it by choosing to not become a Queen Bee yourself while also choosing to not create Queen Bee's in training. Instead, become a successful woman and fully support the females that you supervise. If we also teach our young girls to be confident and secure in who they are they won't have the need to grow up and become a Queen Bee. Encourage their success and help close the gender gap by eliminating the controlling and offensive nature of Queen Bee Syndrome.

What women can do to become good managers and get rid of queen bee syndrome?

- Senior women executives and managers, who occupy executive roles at the moment, can assist other women to advance and better their careers by providing them with guidance and support. This they do even though they themselves did not necessarily receive support from senior women when they were working their way up the ranks 5-0 years ago. Women currently occupying the ranks of senior managers and senior executives seem to be working actively to advance and empower women within their organisations; however, it is important that these senior women become more vocal about supporting women in the corporate world.

- Queen bee syndrome is most easily prevented through open and honest communication. It isn't something that highly placed women in a business or organization always participate in consciously. Instead, queen bee syndrome is a natural reaction to the feeling of competition that women feel toward other women in a shared environment. By encouraging dialogue between female employees or female members of a community organization, for example, this competition can be brought out in the open where it can be addressed.
- Queen bee behaviour has a negative impact on the behaviour of women in business. To reduce this undesirable behaviour mentoring will play an important role. To become a good manager Queen bee can look for a mentor, a mentor indicates as a person who acts as teacher and advisor to their protégé. The word protégé means get information about how to 'behave' in a variety of professional settings, get a perspective of long term career planning and they also teach how to build a circle of contacts both inside and outside their institution. The need for women who display queen bee behaviour to have a mentor is clearly indicated. A mentor generally is a guide and role model. In this research female mentors have shown to give women the confidence to keep on going until they reach their top, without dis-identifying from their gender group. Female mentors ensure that improvement of personal status of women and the concern for the welfare of other women exist side by side.
- Some time women at the top consider their subordinate women are having less career commitment in comparison to their own and male employee so they hardly offer tedious work to women subordinates. Furthermore, we found that women executives also get biased offering higher positions and because of which subordinate women loses the chance of self-improvement. The top executives to change this attitude
Towards women subordinates.
- Male and female networks are different; male networks are task focused while female networks are focused on trust and close, personal relationships. Thus, a female network is expected to offer trust to queen bees and they will probably share their problems easier with their colleagues and subsequently help junior women to
overcome these problems also.

What organizations can do to minimize queen bee syndrome?

- Results of some research revealed that having had a female role model or mentor affected the degree to which women were willing to work for personal and group success within organizations. As explained before, mentoring can work on two levels: on a career development and a psychosocial level. The career development level includes sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection and challenging assignments. The psychosocial level, on the other hand, includes acceptance and conformation, counselling, friendship and role modelling. Because mentoring works on an individual level, it can provide women who are heading for the top with custom-made support. Our research also showed that having had a male or female role model or mentor had positive effects on the work commitment of women. Therefore, we

recommend organizations to provide women with the possibility of building a mentor relationship with a senior and experienced woman during their career to help them advance to higher levels in the organization.

- As with any form of discrimination, if a worker views queen bee syndrome in action in her workplace, she should approach a human resources representative or a trusted superior to voice a complaint. Queen bee syndrome should not be allowed to inhibit the success of women in any organization and organization should appoint a HR representative to solve such problems.
- The organization needs to be alert and prevent this negative behaviour through creating networks.
- Another suggestion would be to develop female leadership training. Such training could be an appropriate method with which female managers can realise how they can positively treat other females on their way up. It can also give support to the women who bear a lot of discrimination, domineering and aggressive behaviour.

Conclusion:

The goal of this study was to examine under what conditions the queen bee effect appears and how the impact of this effect can be reduced. Queen bee behaviour is often displayed by senior women who find themselves often competing against other females in order to maintain their scarce (top) position, and therefore behave negatively towards them, rather than supportive. Use of a mentor can be viewed as a way to resolve this behaviour. Females in higher positions often times feel isolated from other females, since they are the only who deviate from the collective work-life balance norm. While being the only woman in a male-dominated field may give a sense of pride, it can thus also create a lonely existence. Especially when these women work in a male-dominated environment, they suffer from discrimination, domineering, and aggressive behaviour.

As mentioned before, in this study, mentoring could resolve the queen bee effect. Females in management positions suffer from a shortage of female mentors due to a shortage of women occupying high organizational ranks, and the fact that Queen bee behaviour: a women's fight many senior women do not feel comfortable enough in their positions to be effective as mentors as they are still fighting for their own survival. Effect of a female mentoring system, one could also examine whether female networks would impact positively on queen bee behaviour. As senior women often are isolated, or isolate themselves from female colleagues, the development of internal or external female networks could be a solution to their problem (or change their behaviour). Especially in male-dominated hierarchies, including women in mixed internal networks can lead to inclusion instead of isolation. Moreover, in order to solve the queen bee problem mentoring was not only the appropriate solution. Organizations should likely develop women leadership trainings and diversity trainings to make sure that women are less discriminated and stereotyped, and more importantly; receive less negative behaviour by other women. Ultimately, the amount of women in management positions is expected to increase and expected to be good managers is the aim to be achieved.

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