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BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP IN TELECOM: WOMEN'S VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The issue of women's representation in corporate practices is a major concern in today's business world. This study examines the telecom sector in Bangladesh to explore women's perspectives. The study first provides an overview of existing literature to establish the context of women's voices and then presents responses from women working in the telecom industry. The findings highlight several important issues related to women's leadership, career progression, participation in decision-making, and training. The study's results offer important insights for practitioners, academics, and stakeholders in the sector.

Keywords: Gender, Women Voice, Bangladesh.

Introduction

In recent times, Bangladesh has undergone a remarkable transformation in advancing women's empowerment, bringing about a significant transformation in gender dynamics. The country has made notable progress in fostering economic empowerment and augmenting the active involvement of women in the workforce. Employee voice is a crucial facet of human resource management, serving as a mechanism through which employees can influence decision-making processes within an organization, fostering communication, and engagement, and enhancing overall performance (Armstrong, 2006; Marchington, 2007; Donoghue & Siegel, 2005). In recent years, the global business landscape has undergone significant transformations, marked by heightened global activity and increased competition across industrialized nations. This shift has led to a notable influx of women into lower-level managerial positions, reflecting a major change in the composition of the workforce (Harris, 2006). Despite the growing presence of women in the workforce, the advancement of women to senior management roles remains slow globally (Adler, 2002).

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The under-representation of women in top managerial positions is a matter of particular interest, signifying potential changes in power dynamics within organizations and emphasizing the symbolic importance of diversity at the highest organizational levels (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989; Cox, 1994).

This positive trend extends to the Bangladesh telecommunications industry, reflecting significant improvements in this sector as well. It has witnessed significant technological advancements, yet it has simultaneously grappled with persistent challenges related to gender diversity and inclusivity. Research findings underscore the underrepresentation of women in key leadership positions within the sector, revealing a gender gap that extends beyond mere statistics to encompass complex barriers hindering the professional growth of women in telecommunications. These barriers, encompassing gender bias, stereotyping, and limited access to career advancement opportunities, necessitate a comprehensive exploration of the unique challenges faced by women professionals in the telecom industry.

Moreover, in the context of multinational corporations (MNCs), the scarcity of international managers has made the development of female managers for global roles a strategic human resource concern (Selmer and Leung, 2003; Scullion and Collings, 2006). Recent decades have witnessed a positive shift, with more women assuming executive positions, contributing to enhanced creativity and innovation in decision-making processes. Despite these strides, persistent challenges such as gender biases, stereotypes, and systemic obstacles remain. Breaking the glass ceiling necessitates collective action, with suggested measures including gender-neutral recruitment, mentorship programs, and support for initiatives empowering women. Profiles of successful women trailblazers like Sheryl Sandberg and Malala Yousafzai highlight the determination and exceptional leadership qualities required to overcome barriers. Education is identified as a key driver for cultivating the next generation of female leaders, promoting gender equality, and encouraging girls to pursue diverse fields.

In Bangladesh, gender inequality persists as evidenced by its ranking of 133 out of 162 countries on the UNDP 2020 Gender Inequality Index. Alarming rates of child marriage contribute to this issue, with 51% of Bangladeshi women aged 20-24 getting married before turning 18, and 15.5% before reaching 15. Additionally, nearly a quarter of all Bangladeshi women and girls have experienced physical violence by a current or former partner. Economic challenges are prominent, as 7.2% of employed women

in Bangladesh still live below the poverty line, and women face double the unemployment rates compared to men (6.7% for women versus 3.3% for men). Tragically, maternal mortality rates are high, with 173 out of 100,000 women in Bangladesh expected to die due to pregnancy or childbirth complications. These statistics emphasize the pressing need for comprehensive efforts to address and eliminate gender-based disparities in the country (Concern Worldwide, 2022).

While challenges persist, there are notable positive developments within the Bangladeshi telecom industry, indicating a gradual shift towards greater gender inclusivity and empowerment of women professionals. The dedication to gender equality and the empowerment of women is a fundamental principle for numerous telecom companies in Bangladesh, with Grameenphone being one example. The company highlights the profound influence of this commitment on both human rights and the contemporary workplace. Sajjad Hasib, the Chief Marketing Officer, highlights the company's journey over 26 years, from pioneering the Village Phone Program to embracing cutting-edge technologies like 4G and 5G. The focus remains on bridging the digital divide and fostering equitable work environments, with a thriving state of female-led F-commerce in Bangladesh. In terms of gender diversity, Grameenphone has made substantial progress, increasing the gender diversity ratio from 11% to over 19%. Efforts extend beyond numbers, encompassing initiatives like the 'Gender Diversity Program,' aiming at specialized development and cultivating female leadership, particularly in the technology sector. The company is actively engaged in empowering women at the grassroots level through initiatives like 'Internet Er Duniya Shobar,' facilitating digital inclusion and dispelling stereotypes. Initiatives like the Boost Up campaign with Meta showcase a commitment to supporting small and medium female-owned businesses (The daily Star, 2023). Like Grameenphone, other telecoms are also working in terms of women's equality and empowerment. This paper endeavors to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding gender diversity in the telecom industry by examining the prevailing challenges, evaluating the effectiveness of current initiatives, and proposing actionable recommendations. By shedding light on the experiences of the dynamic landscape of the telecom sector, the voice of women is steadily breaking barriers and reshaping the industry. Traditionally dominated by men, women are now emerging as influential leaders, innovators, and contributors in various capacities. With a keen understanding of technology

and a fresh perspective, women are fostering a more inclusive and diverse environment. Their voices bring unique insights to decision-making processes, product development, and customer engagement. As more women ascend to leadership roles, they inspire and mentor the next generation, further dismantling gender stereotypes and fostering a culture of equality. The telecom sector, once characterized by a gender gap, is now experiencing a transformative shift, where the voice of women is not only heard but actively embraced as an essential force driving progress and innovation.

Numerous research studies have investigated historical gender disparities in the technology sector, aiming to understand the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women. Frequently cited issues encompass biases in recruitment, corporate culture, and a shortage of mentorship opportunities. Neil et al. (2008) delineates four key patterns shaping the current landscape of women's careers: the integration of women's careers into their broader life contexts, the significance of both family and career in women's lives, the varied nature of women's career trajectories, and the pivotal role of human and social capital in influencing women's careers. Recent research underscores the close interconnection between women's careers and personal lives, emphasizing challenges related to work-family conflict and achieving work-life balance. Women's career structures deviate significantly from those of men, showcasing a greater array of paths and patterns. While the conventional hierarchical career progression model remains a topic of discussion, studies like Lepine (1992) and Huang and Sverke (2007) reveal diverse career trajectories for women, including upward mobility, stability, downward mobility, and fluctuations. Human capital, encompassing education, training, developmental opportunities, job tenure, experience, and work mobility, is widely recognized as a pivotal factor in career development. Melamed's (1995) research suggests that women's career success is more influenced by job-related human capital attributes, such as mental ability, education, and job experience, compared to men. Women's success is intricately linked to relevant human capital, with education contributing to elevated salary levels and job experience facilitating advancements in managerial positions. Studies emphasize the vital role of social capital in women's careers, pointing out that inadequate social capital can present significant barriers. Women demonstrate proficiency in building informal networks, particularly

with other women, and cultivating network relationships for social support is a common practice among them (Ibarra, 1993; Singh et al., 2006).

The challenges and underrepresentation of women in the technology industry in Bangladesh have been discussed by various authors. Shamma M Raghib, a director in the tech industry, suggests that promoting successful women in tech as speakers and leaders can inspire others. The review also focuses on factors such as family pressures, cultural norms in influencing career choices. Additionally, it addresses the importance of investing in skills and encourages equal representation of women in tech leadership roles. Despite the contributions of women like Luna Shamsuddoha and Sonia Bashir Kabir, the tech industry in Bangladesh remains male-dominated. The government and various organizations are recognizing the need to increase female participation, with initiatives such as the 2015 ICT Division project providing training for over 240,000 women. The review concludes by stressing the importance of dispelling myths and negative perceptions to encourage more women to participate in the ICT workforce. (Huda, 2018). Certain literature also delves into the influence women professionals in the telecom sector, this study aims to catalyze discussions that not only acknowledge the barriers but also actively contribute to breaking them down, thereby fostering an inclusive and equitable future for women in telecommunications.

Objective of the Study

- To investigate gender disparities and challenges for women in Bangladesh's telecom industry.
- To analyze effectiveness of initiatives promoting gender diversity in telecom
- To identify barriers to women's professional growth, including bias and limited opportunities.
- To synthesize literature on women's role in Bangladeshi tech, informing telecom sector dynamics.
- To assess the prevalence of male dominance in organizational practices, particularly in leadership roles, within the telecom industry of Bangladesh.
- To investigate the recognition and documentation of gender-related issues such as the glass ceiling within telecom organizations in Bangladesh.

- To explore the availability of equal employment opportunities for women in leadership roles within the telecom sector of Bangladesh.

The Voice of Women Context

In the dynamic landscape of the telecom sector, the voice of women is steadily breaking barriers and reshaping the industry. Traditionally dominated by men, women are now emerging as influential leaders, innovators, and contributors in various capacities. With a keen understanding of technology and a fresh perspective, women are fostering a more inclusive and diverse environment. Their voices bring unique insights to decision-making processes, product development, and customer engagement. As more women ascend to leadership roles, they inspire and mentor the next generation, further dismantling gender stereotypes and fostering a culture of equality. The telecom sector, once characterized by a gender gap, is now experiencing a transformative shift, where the voice of women is not only heard but actively embraced as an essential force driving progress and innovation.

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Certain literature also delves into the influence of women assuming leadership roles in the technology industry, examining how female leaders impact organizational culture, advocate for diversity, and foster environments conducive to dismantling gender barriers. Research frequently suggests that diverse teams, inclusive of women, bring a wider array of perspectives, thereby enhancing creativity and problem-solving capabilities. Gutner (2001) observes a shift in corporate boards valuing frontline leadership experience. While the number of women CEOs is on the rise, some boards now prioritize experience over titles, especially in fields like technology and international business, aiming to diversify the candidate pool. By focusing on CEO experience, boards can take into account the increasing number of women in leadership roles among entrepreneurs. The Center for Women's Business Research reports a substantial expansion in women-owned businesses with 100 or more

employees and revenues exceeding $1 million, surpassing the growth rates of all businesses of similar sizes. From 1997 to 2000, the number of women-owned firms with 100 or more employees increased by 44%, outpacing all businesses by 68%. In the same period, women-owned firms with $1 million or more in revenue grew by 32%, twice the rate of comparably sized firms. With 6.2 million women-owned businesses in the U.S., 5.7% of all adult U.S. women are entrepreneurs. The latest findings from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Women's Report indicate a remarkable surge in female entrepreneurship, with 163 million women embarking on entrepreneurial endeavors across 74 economies. This notable trend underscores the pivotal role of economic opportunities in empowering women, enabling them to assert their agency and contribute to innovation across diverse sectors (Oguns, 2022)

The framework of exit-voice, as proposed by Hirschman (1970), outlines various situations where markets may fail to offer effective feedback to organizations, and where the expression of dissatisfaction by customers or employees (voice) could enhance organizational performance as an alternative to exiting the situation. In the employment context, voice refers to employees expressing dissatisfaction, while exit occurs when employees decide to quit. The design of work and human resource practices plays a crucial role in shaping the balance between employee voice and exit. The exit-voice framework presents a model that integrates economic factors (exit) and political factors (voice) within the organizational context. In recent times, employers have embraced alternative forms of voice, both within high-performance work systems and as substitutes for traditional unions. Team-based work systems are seen as avenues for collective voice, providing opportunities for direct participation in shop-floor decisions. Additionally, nonunion dispute resolution procedures are considered mechanisms for individual voice, allowing employees to address grievances. The subsequent sections explore the theoretical significance of these alternative mechanisms as indicators influencing employee quit rates. According to Emelifeonwu & Valk (2018), the dynamics of employee voice and silence within the mobile telecommunication industry in Nigeria, adopts an exploratory qualitative case study methodology, utilizing purposeful intensity sampling to select 30 participants from two multinational organizations and one indigenous organization, who then participated in in-depth interviews. The findings underscore the prevalence of a fear of victimization in the Nigerian workplace, influenced by the Sub-

Saharan culture and the state of the labor market, leading to a culture of employee silence.

The Asia Foundation, in collaboration with Banglalink, is addressing the gender disparity in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh. A study reveals that less than 2 percent of firm owners are women, citing obstacles in accessing finance, information, and markets. To bridge this gap, an ICT-based solution leveraging the country's 100 million phone subscribers is being developed. This initiative will connect women entrepreneurs in rural districts, facilitating information sharing, ICT training, and participation in the booming ICT sector. The project, initially in four districts, aims to create a mobile phone-driven network and virtual marketplace, empowering women to expand businesses and access e-governance initiatives. The government's support for affordable finance and recognition of ICT's role signal a positive shift in empowering women entrepreneurs (Al-Muti, The Asia Foundation, 2014).

Bangladesh faces challenges in achieving gender equality despite efforts. Statistics reveal that women do eight times more unpaid care work than men, only 42% of working-age women are in the labor force, and 13% own land. Disturbingly, 54% of women experience physical and sexual abuse, and biases against women are prevalent. Over 99% of people in Bangladesh hold biases against women, impacting their rights. To address this, there's a need for education, community engagement, law enforcement sensitivity, and fair policies. Men must also support women for meaningful progress. The 2023 Global Social Norms Index underlines the urgency for Bangladesh to tackle these issues and promote a more equitable future (UNDP, 2023).

According to Chawla and Sharma (2016), several research questions regarding the experiences of Indian women leaders in ascending to senior positions within both public and private organizations, encompassing the manufacturing and services sectors. The study aims to explore the challenges encountered by these women throughout their journey, categorizing them into personal, professional, organizational, and social issues. Additionally, the research investigates the strategies employed by women leaders to overcome these challenges, leading to the identification of six overarching themes. The paper emphasizes the significance of critical social, behavioral, and organizational facilitators that played a pivotal role in supporting the leadership journey of these women.

Eagly & Schmidt (2001) underscore that the perception of women in leadership roles creates incongruity because leadership is predominantly linked with male roles. Consequently, behaviors considered normal in men, such as assertiveness, are met with bias when exhibited by women due to stereotypical expectations. This phenomenon, labeled "backlash" by Rosette and Tost (2010), refers to negative reactions displayed by men in response to assertive behavior from women. Fitzsimmons & Callan (2016) propose the necessity for development in two areas: human capital and social capital. However, women, often prioritizing task completion at work and balancing family commitments, may encounter limitations in networking, hindering the development of social capital and potentially restricting opportunities for line roles. The social identity theory of leadership views leadership as a group process influenced by social categorization and depersonalization processes based on prototypes linked to social identity (Hogg, 2001). Role incongruity, as emphasized by Rosette and Tost (2010), can impede the career progression of women. The "double bind" or "feminine competency bind" illustrates a situation where acting feminine is perceived as incompetence while acting competently is seen as behaving in a masculine manner (Appelbaum et al., 2003). The role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders suggests that the perceived incongruity between female gender roles and leadership roles results in prejudice in two forms: viewing women less favorably than men as potential leaders and evaluating leadership behavior less positively when enacted by a woman (Rosette and Tost, 2010). Eagly & Schmidt (2001) also argue that women adopting assertive traits might not contribute to the expected diversity from their transformational role, potentially limiting the organizational diversification they could bring.

The study of Zafarullah and Nawaz (2019) states that, despite facing challenges rooted in traditional norms, religious conservatism, and family values, as well as evolving societal dynamics, both employment and microfinance initiatives have positively impacted women's empowerment in Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh is dealing with a big problem: violence against women, especially from their partners. Even though there's progress in treating men and women equally, issues like sexual harassment remain. Laws to protect women exist, but they are not always enforced due to old traditions. Men need to play a crucial role in changing these attitudes. They can start by understanding and challenging sexist behavior, supporting women's careers, and promoting fairness at work. Men can be allies by

listening to and supporting women. By working together, we can create a more equal society (Adiba, 2023).

Lifelong learning and human capital development (HCD) are crucial elements in the career progression of women, particularly in the context of South Africa (Dosunmu and Adeyemo,2018). It underscores the centrality of HCD in advancing careers to senior management levels and emphasizes lifelong learning as a key mechanism for achieving this. The study employs quantitative research methods, utilizing questionnaires administered to 133 junior workers in a mobile telecommunications network in South Africa. The research findings indicate that continuous learning serves as a defense against gender discrimination and acts as a catalyst for women to advance their careers. The authors contend that HCD and lifelong learning play pivotal roles in providing opportunities for women to emerge as leaders in both the workplace and society. However, they emphasize the need for supportive leadership, a conducive organizational culture, and management integrity to facilitate this process. The study reveals a correlation between continuous learning, on-the-job experiences, and women's career development within the telecommunications organization. The article underscores the importance of internal motivation as a driving force for continuous learning and career development. The majority of respondents express job satisfaction, attributing it to engaging work, job security, and promotional opportunities. Despite facing challenges, the women participants, largely in junior roles, are optimistic about opportunities for career advancement within the communications sector. The institutional barriers affecting career advancement, as identified by respondents, include women's beliefs, sexual harassment, discrimination against women, lack of mentoring, prevention by men, and absence of formal qualifications. The findings highlight the significance of ongoing organizational support and training opportunities for women to overcome challenges and achieve success in their careers. The authors argue that women's career success is intrinsically linked to a process of lifelong learning and training opportunities provided by their organizations. They advocate for a supportive organizational structure that recognizes and encourages women's efforts, with senior corporate management playing a crucial role in facilitating job mobility and enabling women to aspire to top positions in the corporate world.

Linehan and Scullion's 2008 study investigates how mentoring and networking impact the career advancement of female global managers,

based on interviews with 50 senior female managers. Their shared experiences reveal challenges in informal organizational processes, particularly in mentoring and networking, hindering their career growth. The findings underscore that female managers often face limitations in accessing global opportunities due to a lack of mentors, role models, sponsorship, or suitable networks, which are more readily available to male counterparts. Interviews suggest that the dominant male group may perpetuate their dominance by excluding women from informal mentoring and networking interactions. The study proposes that improved access to networks and mentors could integrate women into both formal and informal organizational norms, offering them career advantages. Managers emphasize additional barriers in what they term "a man's world," emphasizing the need for substantial change.

The study of Ng & Mitter (2005), delves into the experiences of women employed in the emerging Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sector, specifically those working in call centers that handle customer care services for both national and globally-outsourced businesses. While acknowledging the non-direct comparability of the Malaysian and Indian cases, the case studies provide insights into the transformations in the lives and career trajectories of women in the developing world. The article engages in discussions about whether these new institutions replicate the experiences of export-oriented manufacturing firms from the 1980s. By presenting fresh empirical data and centering on the perspectives of women workers, the article explores whether there is a devaluation of women's work and skills or if women workers have found empowerment through these novel employment opportunities. The conclusion emphasizes the need for increased state attention to the future prospects of this type of work in developing countries, particularly in light of the potential in formalization of these jobs and trade protectionism from the West, especially concerning offshore locations.

Grameen Telecom, established in 1997 as a not-for-profit social business, has played a pivotal role in transforming rural telecommunications in Bangladesh. Through its groundbreaking Village Phone Program, the organization empowered Grameen Bank female members to become entrepreneurs, bridging the digital divide between urban and rural areas. The program, launched in 1997 with 24 subscribers, has since grown to over 1.7 million subscribers by June 2016. Grameen Telecom's commitment to accessibility earned it prestigious awards, including the CAPAM Bronze

Award (1998), "GSM Community Service" award (1998), Petersburg Prize (2004), and the first ITU World Information Society Award (2005). Notably, the program's success is immortalized at the National Museum of Scotland, recognizing its global significance in leveraging telecommunications for rural empowerment. As Grameen Telecom looks ahead, it remains dedicated to inclusive development and fostering a connected, prosperous rural Bangladesh (DhakaTribune, 2023). Also, the Bangladesh government has implemented diverse poverty-reduction programs, with the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) playing a pivotal role in achieving the Millennium Development Goal of nearly halving hunger. Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, leading BRAC, received recognition through Abed winning the World Food Prize in 2015. Founded in 1972, BRAC focuses on improving maternity health, family planning, and empowering women through enhanced healthcare services. The collaboration between the government and non-governmental organizations, supported by the Asian Development Bank, has significantly reduced Bangladesh's poverty rate to 21.8% in 2018. Notably, economic empowerment initiatives for women in Bangladesh have made substantial progress, especially through microfinance and employment opportunities in the readymade garment (RMG) industry, where women constitute approximately 85% of the workforce. Microfinance, with around 92% of borrowers being women, has particularly been successful in promoting increased self-reliance. This concentrated effort on women's well-being has contributed to a remarkable improvement in women's life expectancy, rising from 52.9 years in 1980 to 72.6 years in 2019. Bangladesh has made significant strides in narrowing the gender gap, as indicated by the Gender Development Index, which assesses the ratio of women to men in the Human Development Index based on health, education, and economic resources (Diplomacy and Beyond Plus, 2022).

Knowledge-Centered Mentoring (KCM) can be applied to improve Human Resource Development (HRD) initiatives, particularly in enhancing the recruitment and retention of high-performing female employees (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). KCM provides a framework for analyzing women's career choices, designing HRD programs that consider authenticity, balance, and challenge, and advancing research on nontraditional career paths as individuals' mobility grows. Given the anticipated labor shortage, it is essential for firms to devise strategies that cultivate a work environment meeting employees' need. The KCM serves

as a guide for creating HR policies that align with employees' intrinsic needs and address the complex issues of today's working women, promoting retention and productivity. Despite progress in middle and senior management, women continue to face challenges in reaching top leadership positions.

For the middle class and those with fixed incomes, life is tough here in Bangladesh. Domestic violence is on the rise among them, mainly because of a harmful mindset that sees women as weak This way of thinking comes from a patriarchal society, even though historically, we were more matriarchal. Unfortunately, this mindset is everywhere, affecting our laws, justice system, politics, and even religious institutions. This discrimination persists, showing the need for a change in our society towards more equality (Ain o Salish Kendra, 2023).

Workplace harassment affects millions of women globally, and the absence of robust laws often worsens the situation. In 2019, the "Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work" convention was adopted, receiving support from Bangladesh, represented by government and labor and employer groups. The convention addresses various forms of workplace violence and harassment, encompassing physical, psychological, sexual, and economic harm, with a focus on prevention and protection measures. Despite a historic 2009 judgment by Bangladesh's High Court on sexual harassment, challenges persist, as 12.7% of women still experience workplace harassment according to a study. While the government's backing of the ILO convention signifies progress, effective enforcement and collaborative efforts are essential to eliminate workplace violence and harassment. Women often refrain from reporting incidents due to fear of job loss and societal stigma. Ensuring a safe workplace is a fundamental right for women, and stakeholders must work together to turn protective provisions into practical reality. The imperative is for a cultural shift from tolerance to zero tolerance for violence and harassment (The Daily Star, 2023).

Methodology

This research is exploratory in nature and focuses on the different contextual angles of women's voices related to the telecom industry in Bangladesh. To gain a contextual understanding of the study, the authors have discussed a broad range of literature based on current and previous

studies. To observe and elicit narratives from real-life scenarios in organizations, we visited three telecom companies operating in Bangladesh.

Finding

A total of 16 individuals participated in this study. Among them, 3 were between the ages of 18-25, 3 were between the ages of 36-45, and the largest group of participants fell within the age range of 26-35. All participants had considerable experience in their positions in the corporate world, with a maximum of 15 years of experience and a minimum of 3 years. These participants held various positions in the telecoms industry, including Management Trainee, Senior Architect, Senior Executive, Manager, Deputy General Manager, Ethics and Compliance Manager, etc. All the questionnaire responses are summarized in Table 1 below.

Discussion and Conclusion

The voice of women in any corporate entity is an important output while we are considering the performance outcome of the organizations. Studies have proven that women's intellectual capacity may add value not only in the organization's leadership but also in the organization's decision-making, idea generation, and team-building process of the organizations. The current study is also coming out with interesting findings and shows us the contemporary practices of the telecom sector of Bangladesh. The Telecom industry is one of the leading contributors to the GPD. It comprehends the communication process mostly in our daily transactions today. Therefore, innovation in this sector and women's participation in the management of telecom organizations will be greatly valued to the organization's performance. This study shares 10 different questions across different ages of women working in telecom organizations in Bangladesh where the response through different understanding to the practitioners, academics, and other related parties of the telecom. One of the participants commented during the interview that-

"Women bring different ways of looking at things and skills to leading teams, which really help with making decisions, coming up with new ideas, and keeping everyone working well together. But old-fashioned ideas and unfair judgments can hold them back, keeping men mostly in charge in companies."

Table 1 Survey responses highlighting women's voice.

Sl.	Questions	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
1	The telecom industry has, traditionally, been characterized by the predominance of male professionals.		6.3	12.5	62.5	18.8
2	The challenges and underrepresentation of women in the technology industry in Bangladesh are well-documented.	18.8	37.5	12.5	31.3	
3	The existence of a glass ceiling for women on corporate boards is widely acknowledged.	6.3	43.8	25	6.3	18.8
4	In my workplace, effective mechanisms for employee voice to express dissatisfaction and provide feedback exist.	6.3	25	12.5	37.5	18.8
5	Women in leadership roles often face incongruity and stereotypes compared to their male counterparts.	6.3	6.3	6.3	50	31.3
6	Diverse leadership teams have a positive impact on organizational success.				37.5	62.5
7	There is an observable shift in the telecom industry, moving towards greater inclusion of women in leadership roles.		6.3	6.3	62.5	25
8	Women's voices have significantly contributed to decision-making processes and innovation in the telecom sector.		6.3	18.8	56.3	18.8
9	Equal opportunities for men and women exist in my workplace/community.	6.3	31.3	12.5	37.5	12.5
10	I have received formal education or training related to gender sensitivity and equality	12.5	31.3	18.8	31.3	6.3

Leadership is one of the most prominent contexts in the organizational management concern and studies in HRM and management literature support these facts and give evidence for women's leadership. The study results offset these facts and find a significant percentage that proves male dominance in organizational practices. One participant, during the course of the interview, offered a remark that-

"It's really disheartening to still see this idea that men are more in charge in our industry, even though we've made progress lately. Even though there's proof that women make great leaders, it's still mostly men in charge, which not only makes it harder for women to move up in their careers but also holds back our companies from doing even better."

In this study authors also attempt to know whether these issues are recorded or documented where most disagree with a percentage of 37.5. Career management is the greatest concern for any organization prevailing talent management and employee retention where the issues of the glass ceiling not only offset the motivation and work as the cause for dissatisfaction. The finding indicates mostly the glass ceiling is not acknowledged since they voted 43.5% to support this situation. In the leadership concern in the telecom organizations women leadership may add different windows to oversee the management process. 56.3% of the women who participated in this study agree with this matter since equal employment opportunities are available in the organizations. But to train these women in their career management concerning gender sensitivity and equality is poor in the organizations with a percentage of 31.3. Though the organizations have a grievance mechanism in their practice individuals can express their voice relating dissatisfaction and having feedback. Still, women's leadership faces incongruity and stereotyping in the workplace. Within the interview, a participant shared a comment that-

"It's frustrating that there's this invisible barrier stopping women from getting to the top positions on corporate boards. It's like there's this ceiling that we can't see, but it's definitely there, holding us back. And what's worse is that not enough people in our industry seem to realize it. Climbing the career ladder is tough, and when women keep hitting this barrier, it really brings us down at work. Even though some efforts are being made, we still have a lot of work to do to give women the recognition and help they need to break through and do well in their careers."

Despite these facts, women in the telecom sector believe that diverse leadership will impact the organization's success greatly and their inclusion in the leadership is increasing in the telecom organizations. As the interview unfolded, two of the participants contributed by stating-

"Despite the challenges we face, women in the telecom industry are optimistic about how having different kinds of leaders can help our companies succeed. It's good to see more of us getting into leadership roles too. It feels like we're making progress towards a more equal and diverse industry."

"Even though we've got some tough hurdles ahead, I truly believe that having a mix of different people leading the team can really make a difference in how well our organization does. It's really good to see more people realizing this too. I'm hopeful that if we tackle these challenges directly and push for real changes, we can make things better for women working in the telecom industry."

However, there are several limitations that need to be addressed in this study. Firstly, the sample size is too small to generalize the issue of women's voices in the telecom industry. Secondly, women's voices are crucial to the performance of any organization, but the study only focuses on the telecom sector. This means that the findings may differ across other sectors and may not provide a comprehensive understanding of corporate practices in Bangladesh. Thirdly, exploring women's voices and the factors that influence them with empirical data can help in gaining a deeper understanding of the issue. Lastly, the study's findings are only applicable to the Bangladeshi context, and similar economies may have different practices. Therefore, more research is needed to generalize the issue of women's voices in corporate practices.

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