



## Empowered Women, Thriving Teams: Unlocking the Power of Leadership

Mrs. Amruta V Chougule<sup>a\*</sup> and Dr. Sandhya Anvekar<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Management Studies, Visvesvaraya Technological University, Belagavi

<sup>b</sup>Department of Management Studies, Visvesvaraya Technological University, Belagavi

\*Corresponding Author

\*Email: amruta.vishal.ac@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

In a variety of industries, women's leadership has become essential to building high-achieving teams. Even with advancements in gender equality, women continue to encounter major obstacles when trying to use their leadership skills to improve team performance. This study examines how team performance is affected by empowered women in leadership roles, with a particular emphasis on leadership styles, institutional impediments, and empowerment tactics. In order to comprehend how women's leadership affects team dynamics, the theoretical framework makes use of the inclusive leadership model, social role theory, and transformational leadership theory. The study uses a thorough literature analysis and a qualitative research technique to examine earlier scholarly work, pinpoint important themes, and draw attention to research gaps. According to the research, women leaders frequently use transformational leadership techniques that encourage cooperation and team involvement, which enhances worker happiness, creativity, and problem-solving. But structural obstacles like gender stereotypes and the glass ceiling effect still exist, preventing women from advancing in their careers. Initiatives for leadership development and mentoring are essential for advancing women's careers. For female CEOs, work-life balance is still a major obstacle that calls for laws like

flexible work schedules and parental leave. Women's performance as leaders is influenced by psychological traits such as emotional intelligence, resilience, and self-efficacy across a variety of global businesses. According to the study's findings, in order to fully use women's leadership potential, businesses must make a concerted effort to eliminate systemic obstacles and establish welcoming settings that encourage empowerment and cooperation. Future studies should concentrate on creating plans and regulations to get over barriers and encourage gender-inclusive leadership in all sectors of the global economy.

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### **Introduction:**

In a variety of industries, women's leadership has become a crucial factor in creating high-achieving teams. Businesses and institutions are aggressively promoting women in leadership positions as a result of growing awareness of the influence gender diversity has on organizational success. Research shows that businesses with more women in leadership roles are more innovative, profitable, and have happier workers (McKinsey & Company, 2020). But even with advancements, major obstacles still prevent women from using their leadership ability to the fullest extent possible to improve team performance.

In the fields of management and organizational behaviour studies, research on women's leadership has become more important. Women in leadership roles significantly improve team performance, innovation, and corporate success. Nonetheless, gender bias, institutional barriers, and cultural expectations limit their involvement in leadership positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Despite advancements in gender equality, women continue to be underrepresented in senior roles across industries, and many businesses still face leadership stereotypes, compensation disparities, and the glass ceiling (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

Research indicates that female leaders often employ transformational leadership philosophies that emphasize mentorship, diversity, and motivation, all of which increase engagement and teamwork (Chin, 2018). Diverse leadership teams have been shown to improve decision-making, employee satisfaction, and flexibility for businesses (Adams & Funk, 2017). Many companies still employ male-



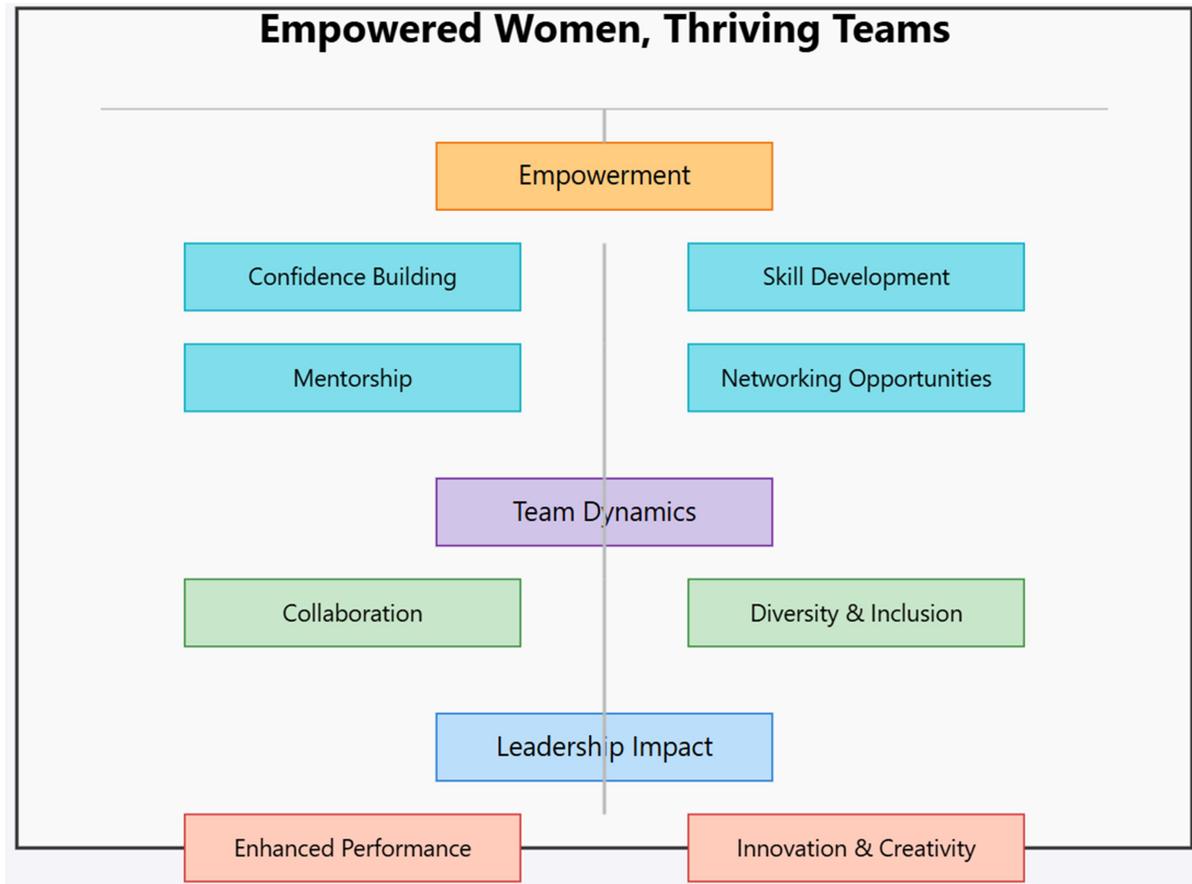
dominated leadership styles, which hinders the progress and acceptance of women in senior posts (Madsen & Andrade, 2018).

Work-life balance is another significant obstacle for women in leadership posts, especially in societies where women are expected to shoulder a greater share of domestic duties due to conventional gender norms (Singh & Vohra, 2019). Although many firms have implemented gender diversity policies, flexible work schedules, and mentorship programs, little is known about their long-term efficacy (Ng & Sears, 2020). Furthermore, research emphasizes how emotional intelligence, resilience, and self-efficacy shape women's leadership performance; yet, psychological aspects affecting leadership confidence are still not well understood (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

With an emphasis on empowerment tactics, structural impediments, and leadership styles, this study investigates how team performance is affected by empowered women in leadership roles. It seeks to determine the ways in which female leaders improve team dynamics, the difficulties they encounter, and the regulations that can support gender-inclusive leadership in businesses throughout the globe.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

Numerous theories of organizational behaviour and leadership shed light on how women's leadership affects team effectiveness. According to the transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985), female leaders who exhibit a participative leadership style and strong emotional intelligence encourage teamwork, motivation, and innovation. Furthermore, the Social Role Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) describes how gender preconceptions impact how successful leadership is seen, occasionally generating biases that impair women's leadership skills. Additionally, the Inclusive Leadership Model (Carmeli et al., 2010) emphasizes how leaders who support diversity and psychological safety improve team cohesiveness and performance.



**Source:** Author Compilation

Empowerment:

Effective leadership and team relationships are built on empowerment. It entails giving people—especially women—the means, assets, and self-assurance they need to take charge and make choices.

- **Confidence Building:** Women's leadership growth depends on their confidence being increased. According to research, women's inclination to assume leadership roles is strongly influenced by their level of confidence (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Self-efficacy-focused programs can assist women in overcoming obstacles and making their voices heard in the workplace.
- **Skill Development:** Training and education that improve women's talents in a variety of areas, such as communication, negotiation, and strategic thinking, are included in skill development. In order for women to succeed in leadership positions, the World Economic Forum (2021) highlights the significance of lifelong learning and skill development.
- **Mentoring:** Women who get mentoring receive direction and assistance in their professional endeavours. Research suggests that women who have mentors have a higher chance of achieving



leadership roles and career advancement (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Mentoring helps women overcome organizational obstacles and creates networking possibilities.

- **Opportunities for Networking:** Women can develop connections and relationships through networking that may result in job success. Women frequently do not have access to informal networks, which might restrict their chances, according to research (Ibarra, 1993). Women's visibility and influence in companies can be increased by providing networking opportunities.
- **Dynamics of the Team:** The relationships and interactions between team members that affect their cooperation and efficacy are referred to as team dynamics.
- **Collaboration:** Because it fosters a variety of viewpoints and creative ideas, collaboration is essential for team success. Research indicates that heterogeneous teams perform better than homogenous ones, especially in terms of innovation and problem-solving (Page, 2007). Empowered women promote inclusion and candid communication, which benefits collaborative cultures.
- **Diversity & Inclusion:** Establishing a successful team environment requires both diversity and inclusion. According to research, diverse teams make better decisions and are more creative (Hunt et al., 2018). Women's empowerment increases diversity, resulting in a wider variety of perspectives and methods inside groups.

**Impact of Leadership:**

Effective leadership has a major effect on both team productivity and organizational success.

- **Enhanced Performance:** Women in leadership positions who are empowered have a beneficial impact on team performance. Research shows that inclusive leadership approaches that emphasize teamwork and empowerment increase worker happiness and output (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). According to McKinsey & Company (2020), companies with diverse leadership teams also have superior financial results.
- **Innovation & Creativity:** Teams that have empowered women foster an innovative and creative atmosphere. According to studies, diverse teams are more likely to come up with innovative ideas because of their distinct perspectives (Leonard & Rayport, 1997). Providing women with leadership positions fosters an environment that is favourable to creativity.

**Current Issues and Trends**

Recent trends indicate that there is a global movement for gender parity in leadership. According to the World Economic Forum, companies that implement gender-inclusive policies claim improved decision-



making and organizational performance (2023). Additionally, the development of hybrid work arrangements has given women more autonomy, allowing them to handle leadership responsibilities more effectively (Forbes, 2022). Despite these advancements, women still face systemic barriers, such as the "double bind" dilemma, where they are perceived as either too assertive or too reserved (Catalyst, 2021). Additional challenges include unconscious bias, limitations on work-life balance, and a lack of mentorship opportunities. These barriers create an uneven playing field that affects women's ability to lead high-impact teams.

### **Scope of the Study**

Understanding the leadership role of empowered women and how they impact team performance in various organizational environments is the main goal of this study. It looks at key subjects including innovation, teamwork, transformative leadership, and the barriers women face, such as the glass ceiling and gender bias. The study takes a global perspective, incorporating research from a wide range of cultural and industrial contexts, including government organizations, corporate associations, non-profits, and academic institutions. It primarily assesses the corpus of literature that has already been produced over the past 20 years (2000–2025) in order to guarantee a current analysis of trends and challenges in women's leadership.

### **Literature Review**

The relationship between women's leadership and team performance has been the subject of more research in management and organizational studies. Empowered women leaders improve workplace culture, collaboration, and overall organizational effectiveness (MacNamara & Collins, 2025). This study of the literature looks at women's leadership responsibilities, how they affect team performance, and the challenges they face in assuming and retaining leadership positions.

Empowered women in leadership roles improve problem-solving abilities, encourage innovation, and raise team morale. They found that gender-inclusive leadership promotes high-achieving teams and enhanced workplace collaboration. Omojemite and Zibongiwe (2024) found that organizations with gender-diverse leadership teams perform better due to improved organizational culture and decision-making. They also examined gender mainstreaming initiatives. Studies show that women often exhibit transformational leadership styles that prioritize mentorship, cooperation, and inspiration (Negruşa & Cristică, 2024). A healthy company culture that promotes



employee participation and higher performance is fostered by these leadership concepts. In the healthcare sector, women's transformational leadership significantly improved teamwork and service delivery effectiveness, claim Kapitan and Kleden (2025).

Despite their demonstrated effectiveness, women in leadership positions face institutional and social barriers that limit their capacity to advance in their professions. Ndlovu (2025) looked at government programs to empower women in agriculture and found that, even with support networks, gender biases and institutional impediments prevent women from reaching their full leadership potential. Similarly, Thalib, Aneta, and Abdussamad (2024) investigated women's leadership in higher education governance. Their findings indicate that gender biases still influence university decision-making, which limits women's opportunities for leadership.

Teams led by strong, autonomous women typically exhibit higher levels of cohesion, trust, and collaboration. When women-led teams have the support they require, they perform better in sectors like healthcare and community development (Wagner, Bogart, & Matovu, 25). Furthermore, women's leadership fosters psychological safety, which raises team productivity and overall job satisfaction, according to Dewi and Tedjasulaksana (2024).

The economic and cultural benefits of women in leadership extend beyond businesses. Leticia, Ntayi, and Sajjabi (2024) investigated the relationship between group identity and women's economic empowerment. They found that cooperative leadership practices help women attain economic stability and foster community development. Hijazi and Al Abdi's (2025) study on the impact of targeted educational interventions for diabetic women found that women-led health initiatives significantly increase patient self-efficacy and healthcare outcomes.

## **Research Gap**

There are still certain gaps in the literature despite the wealth of study on women's leadership and how it affects team effectiveness. One significant gap is the paucity of empirical data about the direct effects of transformational leadership among women on team motivation and long-term performance across a number of industries. According to Ely, Ibarra, and Kolb (2018), most studies on transformational leadership concentrate on corporate environments, paying little attention to how it impacts government agencies, nonprofits, and emerging sectors like technology and entrepreneurship. This is true even though transformative leadership is frequently linked to female leaders (Chin, 2018). Furthermore,



studies conducted by Indian academics like Banerjee and Kumar (2018) and Gupta and Singh (2019) show that although women's leadership in Indian business environments is receiving increased attention, there are currently few corresponding empirical studies in the public and nonprofit sectors.

An important area of study assesses how well organizational efforts to dismantle gender discrimination work. There is, however, an acute shortage of such studies on the impact of specific interventions such as those targeting mentorship programs, leadership development, and gender quotas, including their impacts on advancing women into positions of leadership, though gender bias and the glass-ceiling effect has been adequately discussed (Madsen & Andrade, 2018). Professionals from India such as Mishra and Verma (2021) claim that, despite an increased visibility of female executives in the country's IT and services firms, there exist only a few thorough studies evaluating the impacts of these interventions.

What is more, most scholarship on women in leadership comes from a Western place, which narrows the breadth of the geographical and cultural influences that craft leadership experiences. Some social and economic issues concerning women in leadership positions in developing nations have not received adequate scholarly attention, note Adams and Funk (2017) in their *Women in Leadership* study. To offer women worldwide a boost, a more in-depth understanding and targeted interventions are necessary to attend to the different aspects of gender and culture in leadership dynamics that have received the least scholarly attention (Ng & Sears, 2020).

Confidence and self-efficacy are among the widely acknowledged key characteristics of a leader, but there is lesser attention to the long-term impacts of other psychological traits, like emotional intelligence and resilience, on women's leadership journeys (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Indeed, as noted by Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2019), most of the contemporary researches fall in the category of cross-sectional judgment rather being longitudinal assessment, on how these factors may influence career progressions.

### **Research Problem Statement**

While superior performance is linked to women's leadership, it remains a challenge for many businesses to instill a working culture where female team leaders can thrive. There are few empirical investigations into the issues of women leaders, and associated implications on team performance in corporate contexts. This body of research has yet to explore factors that promote or impede women's performance as a team leader.

**The objectives of this study are to:**

1. Explore the relationship between women's attitudes towards leadership and team performance.
2. Analyse major barriers that limit female leaders from fully exploiting their potential.
3. Propose some ways by which organizations can increase female team leaders' efficiencies.
4. Recommend ways towards developing an inclusive leadership culture that embraces the independence and cooperation of women.

**Research Methodology**

This won't be a small qualitative study but a mammoth review of previous literatures that demonstrate how women's empowerment in leadership structures has an effect upon team performance. Exploratory research methodology is applied to look into prior publications for major themes and propose further possibilities of study. The philosophy of this study now takes up interpretivism and highlights those organizational and cultural contexts, subjective meanings, together with social constructs with a link to women's factors of leadership. The sources of the secondary data mostly comprise credible documents and articles from peer-reviewed journals dated between 1993 and 2025.

These thematic areas explored for the study resources include women's leadership and team performance with some reference to transformational leadership across various sectors. Leadership effects, empowerment strategies, and gender issues are identified as categories for these resources. The literature review and annotation will be very comprehensive so that deeper insight into the research problem is possible. Such an approach implies a review of literature about both leadership and gender inclusive of areas needing investigation.

**Data Interpretation and Analysis****Analysis:**

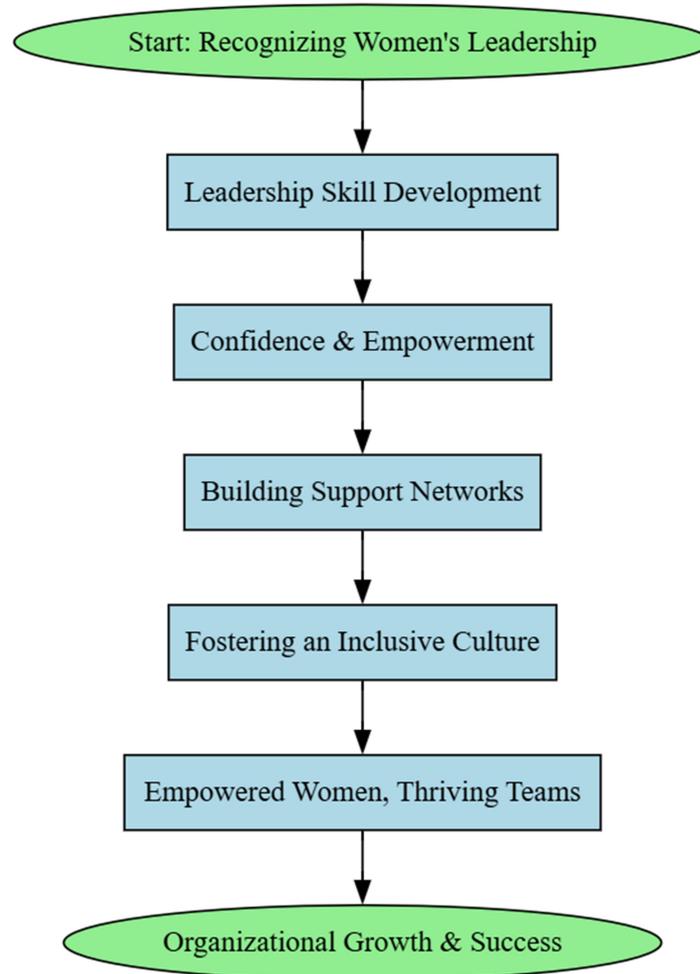
Women's leadership development is necessary for emotional intelligence, connection skills, representation, and collaboration that builds trust and communication, psychological safety Craig Lloyd 2 among members of a team and better improved performance. Research speculates that wh-speculates that it is the teams led by women that tend to bond together, encourage innovation, and have high engagement with their work. Barriers to upward mobility include gender bias, inconsistent mentorships,



the culture around work-life balance, and inequitable representation at senior levels. Other initiatives that should be taken include mentoring and training women leaders focusing on accepting higher levels of responsibility and strengthening teams while formalizing policies to ensure flexibility in work arrangements.

**Interpretation:**

An involvement of these groups in the execution of research and theories to decipher the expectations of women's leadership and team performance carries along much of the discussion in applying a more connected and relational approach. Gender biases, existing structures, and cultural pressures create a double bind for women, as they are often expected to be strong but nurturing at the same time. Authentic leadership in women occurs via mentorship/sponsorship and inclusive policies that manifested dignity through representation of women in professional networks. This means that conscious effort is exerted at every stage to create an inclusive culture—a culture that will allow for change, a culture that will provide not just for the opportunity to challenge the status quo, but that also supports a nurturing atmosphere in which divergent thinking is empowered. Government-supported job positions may provide women with a setting where they will be given additional opportunities to assume responsibility at work while empowering collaborative leadership and fostering effective teamwork.



## Findings

- Transformational Leadership Engages Every Team Member: Female CEOs engage in transformational modes of leadership to boost cooperation and involvement among team members. Their style of leadership increases organizational empowerment, creativity, and problem-solving ability.
- The lingering Glass Ceilings: Glass ceiling and gender discrimination block the advancement of women. Women in leadership positions are disadvantaged, as opportunities remaining for them become less when emphasized with masculine paradigms.
- Initiatives for Mentoring and Leadership Development Are Crucial Mentorship programs assist women grow in leadership positions and improve career retention. Dedication and organizational culture are essential to the success of these projects.



- Harmony between work and life remains a significant challenge. Finding a balance between their personal and professional responsibilities is a challenge for female leaders. The retention of female CEOs is improved by policies relating to flexible work hours and parental leave.
- Mental Qualities Affect Leadership Success Women with resilience, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy are more capable of overcoming challenges. Stress and a lack of institutional support hinder women's aspirations to hold leadership positions.
- Diverse Leadership Teams Strengthen Company Culture Companies with female bosses make better decisions and have happier workers. In dynamic marketplaces, teams with a mix of genders are more adaptable and innovative.

### Suggestions

- Enhancing Programs for Leadership Development: For women, organizations want to establish formal mentorship programs. Training in strategy, negotiation, and confidence-building ought to be incorporated.
- Resolving Gender Bias Through Reforming Policies: Equal hiring and advancement opportunities for women should be guaranteed by businesses. Employee bias training can lessen prejudice based on gender.
- Encouraging Women Leaders to Balance Work and Life: It is necessary to introduce childcare assistance, flexible work schedules, and hybrid approaches. Programs for career re-entry need to assist women in returning after responsibilities to their families.
- Promoting Resilience and Psychological Well-Being: For female executives, organizations should offer coaching and mental health assistance. A robust support system may be established through women's leadership forums.
- Promoting an Inclusive Culture in the Workplace: Women's leadership styles should be respected by businesses without pressuring them to fit in. More women may be inspired if female leaders are acknowledged and honoured.
- Increasing Industry-Wide Research on Women's Leadership: Women's leadership in industries with a male preponderance should be the subject of future research. Regional insights and customized solutions can be obtained through cross-cultural research.

**Conclusion:**

The research emphasizes how important female leadership is to creating high-achieving teams and achieving corporate success. Even if issues like gender prejudice still exist, empowered women executives have a beneficial influence on a variety of businesses. This study offers a theoretical and empirical knowledge of how team performance is impacted by empowered women in leadership roles. It draws attention to important obstacles and chances for promoting gender-inclusive leadership in businesses all across the world. Future studies should concentrate on creating strategies and policies to remove obstacles and encourage leadership that is inclusive of all genders. Organizations must consciously work to remove structural obstacles and foster inclusive environments that encourage empowerment and teamwork if they want to realize the full potential of women in leadership. Women are vital resources for successful teams because of their leadership philosophies, which naturally encourage cooperation and creativity. Businesses may increase women's influence and achieve better results by funding skill development, mentorship, fair procedures, and accountability measures. In the end, developing gender-diverse leadership pipelines is a strategic advantage that positions businesses to thrive in the complicated and competitive environment of today. It is also a moral requirement. Resilient organizations are the result of thriving teams, which are led by empowered women.

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