



# Ladies, let's conquer manufacturing!

Today, women are demonstrating what modern manufacturing offers – rewarding and fulfilling careers with limitless opportunity for growth.

By Nirmala Behera

**T**raditionally, men have been dominating manufacturing - perhaps for centuries. But with women empowerment now given due recognition, and gender diversity on a firm footing, the choice for women joining manufacturing has now gained momentum.

For women, managing shopfloors with diligence is now a career choice; they can give it an innovative and robust feminine touch. Today, women need to think differently as manufacturing offers lot of opportunities and recognition to challenge the “norm”. Career in this field is interesting and rewarding with assorted choices across path. There is a lot of room in this field to grow and reach enviable heights irrespective of your gender.

Today, although women have excelled in other streams, we find less of them opting for this segment apparently due to the inherent notions regarding the nature of this job as well as for other factors like lack of flexible and span of working hours, logistic support, night shifts, safety and so on. Some male counterparts may also have an apprehension in delegation due to the traditional mind-set of women and the perception that they may not be capable of handling the shopfloor pressures. These issues need to be addressed and resolved at the apex level to attract women talent. Of course, many organisations have definitely taken positive steps towards addressing these issues and they are proving to be great role models.

Although women are joining the automobile industry specifically in the support and service department, we need to encourage more women to join in production and take this as a challenge and conquer the traditional mind set of people. Be an example for the women of tomorrow and be a role model for young women who want to break down the gender barriers. Research also shows that leadership diversity can be a key contributor to innovation by recruiting and retaining women in manufacturing industry.



I was fortunate enough to be in a fast-paced career in the manufacturing industry during my formative years. I used to work with the quality system, rolling up my sleeves. I also had hands-on experience in the shopfloor with fellow workmen and engineers. This has allowed me to play many different roles later and make best use of two qualities - people leadership and team work. I always loved challenges as well as problem solving, and these qualities have helped me grow in the manufacturing business.

Today, many outstanding women leaders are making huge strides in developing and promoting the manufacturing industry. They are demonstrating what modern manufacturing offers – rewarding and fulfilling careers with limitless opportunity for growth.

Meanwhile, a gender inclusive workforce has also helped the manufacturing industry to drive profit and get a higher return on equity and has brought about more innovation and creativity with varied perspective. With more talented women in the fray, manufacturing industry can overcome its major obstacle of skills gap. After all, the retention level of women in manufacturing industry is also quite consistent.

The latest trend is that corporate companies want the world within their business to reflect the world outside its business, and in order to make it a reality, they encourage more and more women to join the manufacturing and engineering careers. That is why, I urge every ambitious woman: “Without leaps of dreaming in venturing into fertile fields, we lose the excitement of possibilities turning into realities. So, take that leap of faith! Victory will be yours.” 

*The author is Executive Director – Group HR, RSB Transmissions (I) Ltd.*



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