

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

1.0 Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis it can be concluded that in EPF there are no differences between managerial competencies. It also indicates that there are no such barriers especially discrimination based on gender. But the fact remains that there is a possibility that there does not seem to be an awareness of a discrimination occurring. This is because of historical reason, which refers to women's traditional role as a homemaker, and in a supporting role. Therefore, men have come to accept it as a social norm for women to be in such roles. As such men from the old school of thought find it very difficult to accept that women have advanced into a more dynamic and versatile role. Although such advancement for women would mean that they have climbed the upper rungs of senior management positions. It is sad to say though those women only get as high as lower or middle management positions due to the "glass ceiling" and even if they manage to obtain higher positions in management level, they are either not married or do not have children. Those who actually dominate the senior management positions are men. Thus, men are in a situation to decide which person and gender gets the promotion. There have been situations whereby women have been denied or overlooked for promotion because of their gender. In a male dominated institution it is more convenient to promote a man because he is more mobile, flexible and with less family commitments. A man does not have to think about leaving his children at home alone. He will naturally have his wife to take care of them during his absence. Therefore, giving him the flexibility to concentrate on this profession and also having a family. If a woman concentrates more in a career she will be made to feel guilty because she has neglected her role as mother. It is also because of social

norms, which dictates that a woman cannot have both a career and a family without forsaking either one in the process. These are all due to the preconceived ideas that society implants which causes negative stereotyping of womenfolk. As a result men develop mistrust of women's abilities to perform well in their tasks. And being women she is expected to give extra effort compared to men to meet up to her male superior's standards. Although women make great efforts they will always get the worst end of the bargain in employment because of their gender. This is so because they are not given the opportunity to show that they too are as capable as men are. Although women are capable and they are lucky enough to achieve higher management positions, later they will find themselves shelved in order for younger men.

There is no denying that there is an opportunity to climb the corporate ladder but the "glass ceiling" will eventually stop them. This will be a situation when women can see the opportunities that is out there but unable to grasp it because of numerous barriers like negative stereotyping and the multiple roles of women in society. Most male managers will give the excuse of women's multiple roles interfering with their responsibility at work. But it is quite apparent that women are quite capable of juggling the demands of being a mother, wife and a career woman. Basically it is the traditional attitudes of the upper management which is usually dominated by men. These men for no reason apparently believe or are brought up to believe that women will not be able to cope with the demands of family and career.

Therefore, they take it upon themselves to deny women of their rightful opportunities. On the other hand there are some women who do reject offers for promotion because they do not want to neglect their role as homemakers. In such situations the decision to forgo latitude for promotion solely lies on women and cannot be considered as gender

discrimination. Perhaps, under such circumstances organization can make attempts to create a conducive environment such as flextime compressed workweek and job sharing for women. Naturally with such added incentives more women can be attracted and retained. Based on the results of the study it indicates that women do not feel that there is any barriers to career advancement. Perhaps the difference in culture and social conditioning makes the women from the west and Malaysia differs in terms of their priorities in management.

The cultural factor is also essential in explaining the low representation rate of women in the managerial sectors. The reason being is that Malaysia being an Asian country has a predominantly paternalistic culture. Whereby men are seen as the breadwinners and women as homemakers caring for the young. As such being such culturally it is an accepted norm when women give up their careers for family obligation. Even organizations are conditioned to believe so and as such action to improve and encourage flexibility for women in the workplace have not been initiated.

With economic growth and increasing number of women entering the labour force nations cannot cease to undermine the human capital that can be capitalized. With such a vast human resources women's contribution into the workforce can no longer be ignored. The organizations will have to utilize them or face increasing labour costs. As such to attract and retain these invaluable sources of labour organizations must provide flexibility to allow women to balance their multiple roles in society. This would not only encourage higher number of women to enter the market but also reduce our dependency on foreign labour across sectors.

3.0 Recommendation

3.2.1 National Anti Sex Discrimination Campaign

Although most women expect to return to work once their children are at school, they still do 80% of housework and has little help with child care, either in providing care itself or tax relief to help women pay for it. It is against this background that attempts should be made to improve the situation. Therefore, the Human Resource Ministry should set up an anti sex discrimination campaign to further improve women's participation in the management level. This campaign would be similar to the one in the United Kingdom, which is set up in order to improve women's participation standards. This campaign is called Opportunity 2000. This new initiative should be aimed at improving the quality and quantity of women's participation in the work force. This scheme should bring together employers in the banking, servicing and manufacturing industries to set their own 10 to 15 year targets to improve women's position. This campaign is not something, which is against men. On the contrary it is to improve women's situation and in the long run it will benefit the development of the country in line with Vision 2020. Apart from that at present the trend is towards human resources development and as such who better to be trained other than the women of Malaysia to contribute to our development.

To make matters easier in Opportunity 2000 two approaches can be used to monitor the improvements. Companies could either set numerical targets (40% middle managers to be women by the year 2000), while others can introduce flexible practices such as job sharing and career breaks. This campaign will be effective to help women because of the nationwide commitment and awareness towards this problem. Apart from that a few industries are involved to overcome this problem therefore, under strict enforcement by the

Human Resource Ministry the management will be more sensitive towards issues related to sex discrimination.

The campaign will require three simple things of its members, and audit of their work force to establish the position of women, the setting up of goals – preferably measurable ones, and a public commitment from the chairman or CEO to those targets. All these things put together will show dedication and commitment of the management who are willing to accept the fact that there is a problem and steps should be taken to overcome it. The fact remains that if the management is willing to make efforts to correct the present situation women will most definitely benefit from their campaign.

There is a great possibility that this campaign would garner great success since Opportunity 2000 has made great strides in the UK. The results of the campaign shows that 62 of the companies which joined the scheme now has maternity arrangements which are better than the statutory position, and more than half operate on a flexible hour scheme that allows women to choose suitable working periods to suit their domestic arrangements.

Such a scheme will definitely create improvement if adapted into the Malaysian employment culture. This is because under this campaign the management is forced to admit that sex discrimination occurs. This is considered a major step because there have to be sensitive towards further development in sex discrimination. To further strengthen the situation the role of the Human Resources Ministry is to enforce the campaign and see to it that it's followed. The essence of it is to be completely dedicated towards such an expedition.

3.2.2 Education

Our educational system used to be inhibited by inequality. As a rule, students pursued socially defined fields of study. For example, female vocational students concentrated in services trades like hotel management, catering, beauty care and tailoring, while male students concentrated in the technical fields. At the university level women tend to cluster in arts and education and shy away from engineering and other "hard" sciences. This trend has persisted in Malaysia and in effect has perpetuated imbalances in job placements in industry. However, now our education system is going through some changes under KBSM. Once such example is the syllabus for Living Skill, which does not differentiate between sexes. In which case both boys and girls are taught to cook, sew, plant and do mechanical work. Thus it is quite apparent that the education system too is going through some positive changes. Based on these encouraging changes, hopefully we will see less occupational segregation between sexes and positions, which are supposedly more masculine and feminine. However, these changes will only be seen between 8 to 10 years from now. But, having an education system such as this, which does not segregate sexually, will definitely reduce occupational segregation. Therefore, women should be encouraged to set their sights beyond the traditional sphere of teaching or other courses that land them in clerical jobs, and instead take up courses like mathematics and engineering which have long been domain of male students.

3.3.3 The Role of the Community

After all that is said and done most of the schemes and campaigns can only be achieved if members of the society are willing to change their attitudes on their preconceived ideas of women in

management. If we are indeed committed to creating any sort of caring, progressive and egalitarian society, it is essential to view women as people – not as wives or mothers and impose the role of nurturing future generations on all member of society. There must also be a real commitment to changing laws like the Malaysian constitution of Clause 1, Article 8 whereby it should read that discrimination against gender is also against the law. Apart from the Equal Pay Act 1969 should also be enforced not only in public service but private sectors as well. In this manner the Justice Ministry should keep a committee which will monitor closely that these laws on sex discrimination is taken seriously. This is important to end sexism and discrimination in all its forms no matter how subtle.

Not only should the law play its part but also husbands who are fathers can expand their role if they are provided with avenues to play bigger roles in the family. Providing paternity leave or parental leave to help in the care of their young children can do this.

3.3.4 Gender Sensitizing

There also needs to be gender sensitizing at the top management level to enable women to develop their full potential and be given due recognition, besides providing such support facilities such as child care centers to assist them in balancing their many roles. In addition to that women themselves must get taught and speak with one voice through a women's group with the organization aimed at looking into their own interests. There is a need for both individuals and organizations to re-examine stereotypes and distorted perceptions if women are to adapt and take advantage of existing opportunities. The primary responsibility, however, is with aspiring women managers themselves. After all, they bear the primary

responsibility for their own careers success. How they manage their own careers will have an impact on changing their organization and on overcoming outdated conceptions.

Thus to conclude keeping in mind this two very basic assumptions about both men and women can help. These are as follows: -

3.3.4.1 Human beings have the ultimate choice of creating and acting on alternatives.

3.3.4.2 Human beings need to be true to themselves, even if it means not "fitting" into society.

Women accepting these assumptions will have a better chance at breaking both visible and invisible barriers than those who rely on outdated conceptions and stereotypes to mould their lives.