Women on Submarines

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**Introduction**

Women are integrated into various organizations and are performing challenging duties. They are eligible to perform several jobs that were previously served by men. However, they were not considered suitable to work on submarines. It was recently when the navy lifted the ban on the integration of women in submarines and brought female sailors on board to serve submarine force. The change was not easy and required institutional and legislative changes to make submarine roles suitable for women. It required service efforts to transform some of the mechanisms and make the technologies friendly for female joiners. Many reports state that initially, mixed gender crew has complicated submarine life. As they required smaller submarines and Trident ballistic missiles that resulted in the removal of operational equipment. It wasn't an easy task for women to fit in the job easily. The hard working conditions had made it difficult for women to balance their personal and professional lives. Thus, this study focus on supporting issues and concerns related to life-work balance, job expectations and career development of women on submarines. It also identifies the organizational changes that occurred due to women integration on submarines.

**Discussion**

In 1994, some significant policy changes were made to include women in the navy, still, they excluded assignments for them to be part of onboard submarines. In 2009, the Navy secretary intervened to change the policy and accommodate female candidates. The policy was directed towards recruiting potential candidates who have a desire to work for the navy and could increase the strength of submarine. The Navy lifted the ban on women integration in submarines in 2010, thus, the department has incurred a challenging task to make the female part of the crew. The first crew was selected through a tough competition. It required certain prerequisites to be recruited for the job which could only be fulfilled by the high qualified females. Besides the qualification, they were selected on the basis of their physique, traits, and personality. Submarine forces are involved in challenging tasks on a daily basis thus it is essential for the women to rapidly adopt the culture. They need readiness to quickly respond to the missions. However, the navy had to make structural changes to make women part of the crew. Thus, this study focuses on *‘the specific organizational changes that are required for the integration of women in submarines’*. The paper highlight the issues faced by women in submarines and focuses on the specific organizational change that has taken place as a result of women integration in submarines. It also highlights the benefits it has provided to the women.

**Working Conditions on Submarines**

The life on submarines is different than naval forces, it constitutes an 18-hour rotation where there is no clear time for sleeping or meals. The 18-hour duty is divided into six-hour watch and the remaining is for the training of employees and maintenance of their professional duties. Drills are conducted several times a day which disrupts the normal routine. Thus women are not able to relax or take breaks frequently. Medical emergencies are a concern for women's health in such a tough routine and strict working conditions. Their health condition is highly at risk and is more prone to diseases. The submarines have no windows so the crew cannot see the outside world, the see-through periscopes to target an area. They contact with the shore bases through satellite. Sonar technology work as eyes and ears for the crew members. The duty is characterized by psychological stress and isolation which requires high capabilities and strength to perform under such circumstances. Mostly, due to small inconvenience women are supposed to apologize for matters that aren't even their responsibility. It's sometimes unfortunate to follow such rules where you are made the culprit. The working station s are very critical, which are far from public life (Kane & Horn, 2001).

Also, the communication with families is through emails and connectivity is not constant on ships, thus they may not contact with their families for several days. The issues of retention are vastly prevailing due to work-life balance, and women often take leaves to spend time with their families. The family planning for women is disturbed where they are unable to focus on their routine and health. Thus, the submarine environment seems to be unfriendly and unattractive to many participants. Initially, some women had to spend several days on ships, where they were subjected to abuses by the authorities. The situation requires effective change management strategies in the submarine life. Resultantly, The naval forces were held responsible to take strict actions to address the concerns of women against the treatment of naval authorities and to overcome their issues related to work (Burrelli, 2013).

**Change Management**

Submarines were initially designed keeping the perspective of men such as the size of fleets, technology, and sea crafts. The fleet was made according to the height and reach of men, the display screens were angled in a direction easily accessible to men. Thus, due to women integration, the first modifications were done in the physical structure of the ships. The defense contractors designed boats specifically to accommodate the female crew. Due to the controversy of videotaping the female crew members, while they were undress, the navy forces have asked for separate accommodation for female officers. The primary focus was to built separate rooms and washrooms for female members, by separating the doors to give them more privacy. The crew members appreciated the idea because submarine was a work platform as well as a home for them, they lived as well as worked there. The demands of females were highly focused and they were provided with prompt facilities, thus to encourage more females to apply for submarines. Mostly, in submarines women were discouraged due to an unsafe environment, thus the authorities made it sure that women would be provided with full privacy and safety (Brower, 2002).

Navy has lowered some valves and installed steps at various points. There were modifications made in the vessels reflecting new features such as the USS New Jersey. The reason for preparing new vessels was the unpredictable participation of females which required special technology. The Navy is also trying to modify the existing subs for women, they are developing new ballistic-missile based on the body measurement of respective men and women. They are also redesigning the Virginia-class fast-attack subs to practice efficiently by women. The Submarines machinery operates by turning valves and to redistribute water, thus they should be placed lower so that women would be easily reachable to them. Also, extension handles were located for an emergency air system which was previously not present. The seats were also adjusted to reach the joystick and the display so that everyone can access the ballistic missiles. The most crucial part was to train women in nuclear power and its effective usage. They required maximum time to get knowledge about the usage of particular powers and then they were assigned to serve on combat ships. 24 female officers were initially scheduled for the training pipeline in the standard submarine. Also, the initial group of females was hired from the existing officers of Naval Academy who were performing at the management position. The first group completed the nuclear power school and officially reported after one year in 2011. However, they were allowed to guide ballistic and missile submarines (Iskra, 2007).

In 2013, women were allowed to serve on attack submarines that were the most critical tasks. Women with high capabilities and confidence were given the job to serve the first women attack submarines. The process of qualifying women for such post requires changes in the laws and policies. The policies include primarily the physical readiness of candidates for the job, which covers the data for the last 4 years and strictly assess the performance in training. Medical tests were conducted of females to check their fitness and suitability for the job. Then, they are provided with high professional training which involved the hardest drills to make them efficient. Earlier it was thought that the change management will cost navy heavy amount due to major changes in the system and technologies. But it has also increased the efficiency of the Navy as well. The cost was done for the lifetime performance of the Navy and to include women in all professionals. It has highly encouraged women that they can perform the toughest jobs without any fear. It increased their confidence level and more women are applying for the jobs on submarines. The change management has also increased the post for female submariners, thus they can apply for the different posts to serve on submarines. Doctors are employed on submarines to take care of the health of females and to protect them from vulnerabilities (Kane & Horn, 2001).

**Outcomes of Change Management**

The outcomes of women integration in submarines suggested that it encourages diversity of thoughts and open better opportunity for career-oriented women. It provides women with intellectual superiority and there is a constant improvement in their accomplishments. The submarine force further encourages women to develop mentorship skills. It also inspires them to maintain positive relations with their crew members. It is not the first time that women are serving in forces and submarines missions. In the world war I and II, Women have served a great role in accompanying the forces and has carried out official responsibilities. Thus, with the increasing technological advancement, it was necessary to inform women about the new technologies and nuclear power, so that they can also work on them. Women should also be given the skills so that they can perform in the safeguarding of their territories. thus it was necessary to include them in the new processes (Ritchie & Naclerio, 2015).

The highly qualified individuals are taken on board. For the warfare ships, individuals are highly selected on their technical ability and response to contribute to the navy. The job is base on who can better serve the country purpose, the women with high self-esteem, confidence and will power tends to be more successful on the ships. There are hard missions on a submarine, and the women need to be proactive to all situations. There is no acceptance for mistakes on submarines, the incompetence can lead to the termination of employees. Thus one needs to be highly energetic and responsive to duty. Their personalities are developed in such a way that they are more humble towards sudden situations. They are patient and softly handles situations in stress. They become more concerned about nuclear power and take great responsibility for safeguarding them (Doan & Portillo, 2017).

Women are now working as engineering officers, damage control officers, and emergency officers. They are part of attacking submarines which incorporates them with leadership qualities. They know how to keep secrets of national defense, they have played an important role in the Cold War and the War on Terrorism with incorporating the high technology weapons. They have played their role in conflicts and wars. The crew member believes that once you learn the work, the challenges are motivating and will keep you going. Women contribute largely to the force, covering logistics specialties to better perform their jobs. Women tend to make strong bonds in with warfare units. The submariners are judged and promoted on their abilities regardless of gender anymore. Women are also provided awareness about sexual harassment when they join the sub. The female crew members now believe that they are so busy on submarines that they seldom realized that they have spent four to six months. Women are provided with all the facilities such as washing machines and dryers.

**Conclusion**

Female submarines officers on board are the next step to inclusive strategies, where everyone is involved in the developmental process. The integration of women has made the submarine force stronger because of their capabilities. Although it has cost the Navy a major amount, which earlier they felt was impossible to manage to integrate women on submarines. But the change has effectively impacted the lives of females. Females have become more confident and powerful. They know they can perform any job regardless of the fact how much challenging it is. The women submarines were started by the US Navy, which is known for its efficient diversification in various departments and offering challenging roles to both males and females. The forces tend to provide equal opportunities for everyone to show their capabilities. Thus, female inclusion has resulted in greater support for the submarine. Female officers want to be referred as ‘submariners,' instead of female submariners. They want to stand at the same point as men and should be given equal power to use technologies and nuclear equipment. Initially, the integration of women was quite critical and challenging, however, later they have efficiently cope up with the environment of submarine life. Women with high will power are selected for the job, who give more importance to their countries than their selves. Women are performing outstandingly in all walks of life, and with time they will be proficient in submarines as well.

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