

Gender Equality and Human Rights at Workplace

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Abstract—Gender equality and human rights at work is an essential dimension of poverty reduction, economic development and individual empowerment. In the past few decades, there have been huge strides with legislation, campaigns and corporate responsibility. But, despite these improvements, profound inequalities are still found in several areas of the workplace. Discriminatory practices such as differences in remuneration, barriers to accessing leadership positions, harassment, low presence in decision-making, discarding one's capabilities based on culture such as motherhood, continue to undermine the role of women and other marginalized groups. In addition, LGBTQ are often subject to discrimination, exclusion and the refusal of equal access to benefits and opportunities. This research paper seeks to analyze the root causes of gender inequality and human rights violations at workplaces. Finally, the study reinforces the notion that pursuing gender equality and human rights is not simply a matter of doing the right thing; it is also a matter of doing the smart thing if future growth of the modern global economy is to be sustainable. The results emphasize that a concerted effort from organizations is necessary to overcome these inequalities, which requires policy change, cultural change and accountability mechanisms; otherwise, improvements will be slow and uneven. The paper concludes by proposing solutions aimed at creating safer, fairer, and more inclusive workplaces where every individual can thrive regardless of gender, background or identity.

Index Terms—Diversity, gender equality, human rights, inclusion, sustainability, workplace discrimination.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Gender equality and women's empowerment have been explicitly recognized as a key to the social and economic development of the nation. United Nation in its Millennium Summit in 2000 declared 'Gender

Equality and Women Empowerment' as one among the Eight Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to be achieved by the year 2015 to which India was also a signatory.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men. Equality does not imply that women can have in any manner they see fit, but it means that people of both the sex get equal opportunities. It means equality in opportunities for women and men in the field of education, healthcare, economic resources, employment, leadership positions, participation in political life and decision-making process and contributing towards economic, political and social development of a nation. The United Nations regards gender equality as a human right. The Human Rights Day in year 2021 was observed under the theme - Equality, reducing inequalities, advancing human rights. Gender equality is a common agenda and part of the plans of United Nations, World Health Organization, International Labour Organization, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other international organizations which are also emphasizing on the need to address the causes of persistent gender discriminatory practices.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:

- To analyze the root causes of gender inequality and human rights violations in workplaces.
- To evaluate the consequences of discrimination on employee performance, organizational growth, and societal development.
- To assess global initiatives and corporate policies promoting equality and inclusivity.
- To propose actionable solutions for

organizations to create safer, fairer, and more inclusive workspace.

III. METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research method. Data extracted comprises secondary data from reputed journals, official government documents, institutional case and international declarations of human rights. The study focuses on discrimination in the workplace, pay disparities between the sexes, and a human rights approach to labour laws. The objective is to identify trends, evaluate agency practices and offer recommendations for action.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Equal Pay Gap Equal pay: The principle of equal pay is that men and women are entitled to be paid the same for work of equal value. It is a requirement under the law that equal work be paid equally. For similar work women are still paid 20% less than men across the globe (ILO, 2022).

Harassment at the Workplace: Prohibited Act Harassment at the workplace means unwelcome behavior of any type that is intended to intimidate, degrade, belittle, or humiliate, or otherwise undermines or harms the recipient. It may manifest in many ways from bullying, discrimination, to sexual harassment. According to a UN Women (2021) report, almost 1 in 3 women have been sexually harassed in work related spaces.

Representation and Leadership Gaps: Leadership inequality remains a significant issue contributing to workplace gender inequality. Despite the fact that a lot of women are working women, there is less representation of women in senior management and corporate boards. Only 30% of the world's leaders are women - Catalyst (2020). This disparity is not because they lack the skills, but they face shackles barring them from growing.

Bias against Women from Underrepresented Groups: Not all women experience bias equally. Crenshaw (1989) introduces the concept of intersectionality: that is, women who find themselves part of racial, ethnic, or LGBTQ groups are subject to dual forms of discrimination. The Stonewall Report (2020) also reiterates the fact that LGBTQ employees remain

excluded and denied benefits in a number of employment environments.

V. ANALYSIS

Workplace gender inequality persists as a stubborn global problem with women's pay, career advancement and proportion in leadership positions often negatively impacted. Despite increasing understanding and the legal frameworks to facilitate shared equality, there are still structural glass ceilings that stymie women's engagement in the labor market. At large, women continue to be victims of ingrained workplace inequities, with the gender wage gap also being the most common sign of systematic discrimination. Women earn between 20 and 30 percent less than men on average, a disparity that is especially glaring in high-tech industries where the skills and levels of responsibility are similar, and in the informal sector, where women typically work without formal contracts and are underpaid. In India, for instance, women generate close to 18% of the GDP, but their labor force participation falls far short of its potential, indicating systemic and social constraints on participating in the economy. Leadership representation serves as a reinforcement of these imbalances with women making up only 29% of senior management globally, and in corporate boards women are less likely to be seated, limiting diverse perspectives in strategic decision making and reinforcing gendered power structures. Concerns about workplace harassment and safety further contribute to closing off opportunities for women to advance their careers. Virtually nonexistent complaint systems and fear of reprisal keep women quiet, an issue that has been cast into the international spotlight with the emergence of MeToo, which brought to light serial sexual harassment across sectors, leading to tougher anti-harassment policies within industries such as entertainment, technology and corporate. These obstacles are compounded by cultural norms and policy failures: patriarchal beliefs that tend to typecast women as less - serious about their career than men contribute to a stereotype that's often projected on working women, and in many workplaces, there are ambiguous anti-discrimination guidelines, and in countries where there are laws, authorities often struggle or don't bother to enforce them. Nevertheless, there are positive developments in

the face of these obstacles. Firms like Accenture and Microsoft have put in place mentorship programs, flexible working schedules and fairer recruitment practices that have led to more women in leadership positions. Likewise, in Scandinavia, Norway and Sweden stipulated that companies must include boards seats that are female occupied, and the result has been a rise in female representation at the top decision-making level. These efforts also show that systemic change by enforcing policy, changing culture and an organization's investment is eroding gender inequities and can help create a truly inclusive profession.

VI. FINDINGS

- Gender differentials in work and human rights abuses at work exist everywhere in the world, with in developing as well as developed economies: There is no region and no level of wealth, no society by size, in which gender equality has been achieved. In the developed world, women battle obstacles in representation in leadership, wage equalization, and the ability to advance their careers; in emerging economies, barriers are further compounded by the informalization of work, the lack of legal protections and societal expectations. Human rights abuses have also been documented including sexual harassment, hiring discrimination, and disparities in both access to and opportunities for training and promotion, highlighting the systematized nature of gender inequality, cutting across geographical and industrial levels of development.
- Cultural stereotypes: Gender roles are deep rooted cultural norms which dictate the role of women with regards to work, women are unable to participate in the workforce, or are relegated to lower-paid and unseen roles. Stereotypes such as women are less ambitious, more family-oriented, or not as leadership effective and maintain discrimination, even in organizations with so-called gender equality policies in place. These types of biases become opaque and subtle: Implications of decision-making, performance evaluations and promotions that we cannot (in many cases, are unwilling to) quantify, point to the fact that legal frameworks are not enough to quash inequality in the workplace when cultural

prejudices still prevail.

- Inequality also has a negative effect on employee morale, mental health and overall productivity: Discrimination and partiality in the workplace can create a huge impact psychologically and professionally. Two out of three women, who are targets of harassment and discrimination, earn less than their male counterparts or receive biased performance reviews experience stress, anxiety and decreased job satisfaction that can result in burnout, absenteeism and attrition. This is not only bad for the employees' wellbeing, but also for company performance and staff are less likely to innovate, collaborate and be productive.

VII. SUGGESTION

- Stronger Legal Frameworks:
Among the measures, the most important and essential of all is the extent of role government plays to ensure gender equality at work, such as by formulation and strict enforcement of laws, besides the medical and paternity benefits, preventing discrimination and equal pay for equal job. More robust regulations should also have clear anti-harassment rules, strong reporting mechanisms and penalties for violations.
- Corporate Accountability:
Corporates have a responsibility to drive workplace equality by ensuring transparency in annual diversity and inclusion reports. These reports can also monitor statistics including gender pay gaps, leadership representation, hiring, and retention. Public disclosure of such data motivates companies to establish measurable objectives, stay accountable to stakeholders and create an inclusive corporate culture at which diversity and equity are central.
- Inclusive Policies:
However, workplaces must implement inclusive and flexible policies, including: Gender-neutral parental leave, flexible work hours, telecommuting. Such policies acknowledge that workers have a variety of personal and family obligations and they also ensure that men as well as women are able to balance their responsibility to work with their personal lives. A diverse workplace not only prevents attrition; it also makes employees happier and your workforce fairer.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The workplace gender equality and human rights are not an optional idea for today's organizations, but a necessity. Long Standing pays gaps, underrepresentation in leadership and disparities in workplace safety reflect the pressing need for across-the-board overhauls to address deficiencies in law and culture and in management. Laws aimed at penalizing companies that don't provide equal pay, don't reduce harassment or don't offer parental leave must be steeled and enforced and companies need to adhere to transparent disclosure around their diversity and inclusion measures. Cultural change makes a great difference and it is also essential to continue to raise awareness within the workplace and to set goal to fight that behavior which is so infused by the culture that we assume it's normal: those unconscious prejudices and discriminative attitudes that hinder both women and disadvantaged groups to unlock their full potential. For companies that value diversity and inclusion, this involves not only meeting international standards like the ILO conventions and UN Global Compact principles, but developing more creative, collaborative and adaptive teams. Today's workplaces require a more enlightened approach which will see far more women and diverse talent generally, equally participate in and contribute to their organizations regardless of gender, ethnicity or generation that they will be able to create a better environment in which everyone wins. So, it is vital that the workplaces of the future turn policies and organizational structures on their head to ensure that workplaces of the future are fair, transparent and open to all, providing access to equal opportunity for all employees irrespective of their gender, race or background that they have the same opportunities to add value, create long term careers and work in a substance way in an environment that is safe and supportive.

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