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Workplace Issues with Women

Daisy Raj

Assistant Professor, University Of Delhi

Daisyraj84@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The affluence of this paper is the workplace issues that the women are facing in their workplace. This paper is designed to bring the light on the issue the even in this modern era women are still fighting for gender equality.

Keyword: *Woman, Gender, Workplace.*

INTRODUCTION

Imagine a person with blue eyes. Since their eyes are blue, everyone that has “normal” eyes gets 130% more pay than you do, have more opportunities to climb the corporate ladder, and more respect in society. Truth be told, I’m not talking about people with blue eyes. I’m talking about women. They have all of the conditions above, and more, such as being sexualized in the society. No person of any gender should be discriminated against for any reason. Women and men, including transsexual people, have the right not to be discriminated against at work because of their sex.

The law recognizes four forms of discrimination at work:

Direct discrimination (less favorable treatment of a woman than a man or vice versa.)

Harassment (unwanted behaviour violating the person’s dignity)

Indirect discrimination (a provision or practice that puts one sex at an unfair disadvantage)

Victimization (less favorable treatment because you make a complaint of discrimination)

Gender discrimination in the workplace is unfortunately and sadly a very common phenomenon. Gone are the [days](#) when a woman would just stay home and cook and clean. Times have changed and women are part of the everyday workforce just like their male counterparts. In this modern era, women are still fighting to be treated as equals and not just as objects, however, there has been great progress in the last few decades. Women are expected to manage both work and their households and they have been doing this with the utmost of efficiency. However, their progress doesn’t come without its share of cons. As if being the weaker gender wasn’t enough, women face a lot of discrimination at the workplace. This is a common issue in today’s world and most importantly it is a Global problem which is restricting the career growth of a woman as well as her self-esteem and confidence. There is a need to understand the ways in which such discrimination is rampant and also the ways in which we should tackle these issues.

Workplace Issues and Problems That Indian Women Face Everyday

Being a woman in the [Indian](#) corporate setup is a mixed bag, and while large companies are trying various ways to retain their women employees, there are several challenges that women still face. Culturally and socially, India has a long way to go before women are genuinely treated as equals in the workplace. Here are some of the issues that women struggle to overcome in corporate India.

The Infamous Glass Ceiling

Of late this is a term thrown around a lot with respect to women in the corporate sector. The imaginary ceiling up to which a woman can grow in her [career](#) is a concept that is taken for granted in the Indian society. There are several reasons why very few women make it to the top rungs of a firm – family commitments and gender discrimination in the workplace are just a couple. When two people are considered for the same role, many a time a male employee is chosen over a woman simply because they don't have as many strings attached like pregnancy and childcare.

Unequal Pay

Women in a lot of firms are paid 20-30% less than their male counterparts, often without valid reasons. Again, the skepticism of a firm to invest in their women employees is very evident. “What if she resigns because she needs to take care of a parent or a child?”

“What if she quits because her husband needs to move out of the city?” – These are just a couple of questions that run through the employer's mind. Unless women are paid the same as men for the same [work](#), it is very difficult to retain the female workforce.

Employee Security

A lot of times women, especially in the BPO setup and in many IT firms are required to work for very long [hours](#). Shweta Chawla, an employee of an IT firm says, “My Company has cabs for us to use when we get delayed, but who's to say we're safe even in the cabs at 11 pm?” There have been several cases of women employees of BPO organizations being raped and murdered by cab drivers in the wee hours of the morning. Security is a factor that is extremely important when a woman makes a choice about working.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Suggestive statements made by bosses or peers, a careless brush of the backside, conversation with sexual overtones – these are not uncommon in corporate India. Organizations usually have a system in place for women employees to report sexual harassment and take legal action. However, there are two major issues here – inability to recognize sexual harassment in some cases, and fear of career setbacks if they report a superior.

Lack of Support from Immediate Superiors

Many a time women have a tough time dealing with immediate bosses who are male. This is due to factors like lack of sensitivity of the boss towards the employee's health concerns or family commitments, and assumptions about her capabilities on the basis of her gender.

Lack of Support from Family

While this is not an issue directly at the workplace, if a woman doesn't have the support of her family, it affects her performance at work. Spouses and parents in law sometimes are unwilling to share responsibilities at [home](#) and with respect to childcare. This makes it all the more difficult for women to focus on work.

Women Only Networks and Businesses -A Promise or a Curse

It seems to me that nowadays every company or organisation that has heard of the hype about gender diversity & inclusion quickly sets up a Women's Leadership Program/Network or something similar and leaves the women in there to their own devices, while the men up there are busy running the world. Or a group of women, each realising they can't find their way into the old boy's network, get together instead and create a women's network, working hard to support one another, hoping for a miracle. Elsewhere I have expressed my opinion that societal problems/issues should be solved/handled by both men and women. They are the two main resources the society has. For ages, men have done it all alone while women have stayed silent/indifferent. & not too many are happy with the results. Now, we cannot expect to change everything by women going all abuzz and men staying silent/indifferent where they are. Imagine two mutually exclusive circles in the bigger circle of society, one of which is the business world run by men and the other, women's business networks working so hard but all on their own. I don't see how this set up can solve anything at all. I'm not saying there is any harm in having women's networks but as long as we know these networks are not there as the ultimate solution to the problem. OR, as long as we have made sure that they are a temporary solution until the fundamental change (that we have already thought of!!), & which usually takes a longer time, will catch up with us later in a few years time. We need to know whether or not we have come up with that fundamental change, and we need to be able to differentiate between support systems or temporary solutions and the deeper, fundamental change.

FINDINGS

As per the research was done and the facts presented above, following has been found:

1. The imaginary ceiling up to which a woman can grow in her career is a concept that is taken for granted in the Indian society.
2. Women in a lot of firms are paid 20-30% less than their male counterparts, often without valid reasons.
3. Security is a factor that is extremely important when a woman makes a choice about working.
4. Organizations usually have a system in place for women employees to report sexual harassment and take legal action.

However, there are two major issues here – inability to recognize sexual harassment in some cases, and fear of career setbacks if they report a superior.

SUGGESTIONS

As per the research and the findings, the following can be suggested:

1. A balanced gender group in an office after all not only helps the team work better, it helps create a healthy workforce. Men will then automatically learn to be social and to be more formal in the workplace as opposed to being just boys when it is an office full of men. This also promotes healthier interaction between men and women.
2. The best way to deal with gender discrimination is to educate employees and to hire women for HR or some managerial posts. Men will then have to deal with the fact that they need to report to a woman and eventually when they see that it's not that much different, they may just warm up to the role.
3. It will take a long time if ever for the problem of gender discrimination to completely stop, but in the meantime what can help is promoting the concept of equality between genders. The male workforce should not be made to feel like as though their jobs are threatened by their women counterparts. Sometimes the fear of women taking over their jobs also makes them discriminate against them. It's important to harvest the idea of a healthy team by maintaining an equal distribution of men and women employees in offices.

CONCLUSION

Many of the biggest workplace challenges facing women today still revolve around gender. Why do women still earn less than men holding the same job? Will the glass ceiling ever be reached or for that matter shattered? Is a balance between family and career attainable? What will it take to establish a work environment where gender is a non-issue? So many factors have dominated the women's workforce for many decades. Over the years, even though women have long earned to be in the workplace, some of their choices have not come without disappointment.

Sometimes, male management teams prefer to hire or promote male employees rather than the female ones although both are just as efficient when it comes to working. There is often a myth that women are too emotional or that they take too many leaves once they get married to have babies. Sometimes organizations actually believe that hiring a married woman is trouble because of the fact that she will be a mother tomorrow and that might affect work.

In spite of these thoughts and beliefs, women have still made it to the top. Although not without the support of a number of working executives who give credit to women and believe them to be equal to men.

If a woman progresses, the entire family will progress. It is time to let the world accept this fact for a better tomorrow.

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