

A STUDY ON GENDER EQUITY IN EMPLOYMENT

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ABSTRACT

*“Every human has the right to enjoy equal treatment and opportunities”,
when this is followed there is no need to talk about gender equity.*

Gender equity is recognizing that strength, abilities and limitations in each gender and provide opportunities to attain equality, it is not only a fundamental human right, but anecessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

Gender equality in employment means employees and employers of all gender have equalityin access to the following:

- *Equal pay for similar responsibilities*
- *Equal opportunities for promotions and career progression*
- *Equal consideration of needs*
- *Equal access to financial and other resource*
- *Equal training and learning opportunities within the company*
- *Strict company policies prohibiting sexual harassment and power abuse*
- *Equal societal approval*

Women currently make up just under 47% of the worldwide labour force. 72% of it is male. With certain places facing a disparity of more than 50 percentage points, that represents a difference of 25 percentage points.

According to a Forbes survey, 13.76% of Indian entrepreneurs are women. This figure has more or less remained the same throughout the past few decades. This is a result of the social and financial limitations that women confront.

This research paper, aims to examine the current state of gender equity in employment, themany steps that government has taken to bring in gender equity and the strategies to be adopted boost gender equity.

INTRODUCTION:

Historically societies have viewed women, transgender people, and nonbinary persons as "weaker" or less significant than men. But for a country to be fully developed and flourished it should change its slogan of calling them weaker, instead it should give hands to raise them up and treat them equally. Despite many changes that have empowered women, gender equality is still a distant goal.

This study aims to bring out the issues in gender equity that women face in the important sector of employment, because it is only through employment women can achieve economic freedom and sustainable development.

Gender equity implies, "Provision of fairness and justice in the allocation of privileges and obligations among men, women, and all genders". Recognizing the strengths, prowess, and limitations of each gender and providing opportunity to achieve equality is not only an essential component of basic human rights but also the cornerstone of a peaceful, wealthy, and sustainable global community.

The societal roles and expectations of men, women, and people of third genders at work, at home, and in society have created gender parity. When all people are respected for their unique abilities, skills, and demands irrespective of gender in the workplace, in the family, and in society if they are appreciated for their talents, skills, and abilities, our world is a better place.

GENDER EQUITY AND SDG:

The SDGs (Global Goals) were established by the United Nations as a call to action to ensure that everyone lives in peace and prosperity and to abolish discrimination against women and girls. Empowering women and girls is essential for the long-term sustainability of women, and research has shown that doing so promotes their economic advancement.

The number of women in the workforce is rising, but there are still significant disparities in some places where women are routinely denied the same employment rights as men. The unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work, discrimination in public office, and lack of access to financial services are some of the other problems that women confront.

The focus of the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to change the world, through gender equality. The fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) places an emphasis on giving women equal rights to economic resources, financial services, inheritance, control over land and other forms of

property, and natural resources in conformity with national laws. More gender equality will be attained by accomplishing these and encouraging more women to hold leadership positions.

GENDER EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE AT THE MOMENT:

To achieve gender equity in the workplace, men, women, and people of all gender identities would have equal access to opportunities, including promotions. Without their gender being a determining factor in business decisions, leadership roles, initiatives, and more.

Women currently make up little under 47% of the worldwide labour force, while men make up 72%. Female labour force participation in India is much lower than male labour force participation, according to the annual report of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2019–20 data. While the male involvement rate was 56.8% in FY 2020, the female participation rate was only 22.2 %. Moreover, women earn 23% less than males globally, which has a direct or indirect impact on higher rates of poverty, greater vulnerability to external shocks, an inclination to focus on lesser-paying employment, and poorer savings and investment propensities.

Additionally, when it comes to self-employment or entrepreneurship, women participate far less than males do. According to a Forbes survey, there are only 13.76% women entrepreneurs in India. Throughout the previous few decades, this number has essentially not changed. This is a result of the social and financial limitations that women confront. The following are the conclusions reached by ILO economists regarding the causes of the gender gap after conducting research in 142 countries and territories:

1. Women who are married or who live with a partner are less likely to work in developing, developed, and Arab States and Northern African (ASNA) nations.
2. Women are forced to leave the workforce due to a lack of institutional support systems to care for children, the elderly, and ailing family members.
3. In undeveloped nations, one of the biggest obstacles to women entering the workforce is their safety and risky travel habits at odd hours.
4. Religions is highly influential for women to decide on their job routes, especially in poorer nations.

RESPONSIVE LEGAL ACTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT:

Women's engagement in the labour force is a crucial indicator of economic growth. Providing women equal opportunity and ensuring that they receive their fair share of rights contributes to attaining not only gender equality but also a number of other development objectives. Empowering women is a crucial component in achieving gender equality.

The Constitution's Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Responsibilities, and Directive Principles of State Policy all refer to gender equality. The Constitution not only promotes the State to implement various measures of equality and women's empowerment, but it also guarantees the empowerment of women.

Equality before the law is discussed in Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. The State cannot overturn the fact that everyone is treated equally in the eyes of the law.

Discrimination against people based on their race, caste, gender, place of birth, or religion is forbidden by Article 15. The State may make any particular provisions for women and children that are not prohibited by this Article.

According to Article 16, every Indian citizen is entitled to equal opportunity while applying for jobs or being appointed to positions of authority.

According to Article 39 of the Constitution, the State is responsible for ensuring that both men and women have an equal right to an adequate standard of living, that both sexes receive equal pay, that there is no concentration of wealth as a result of the economic system, and that material resources are distributed to achieve a common goal.

Article 42 directs the State to provide maternity leave and reasonable working conditions.

Thus, gender equality is recognised as a human right in the Indian Constitution. In addition to these constitutional clauses, certain Acts that guarantee gender equality have more or less grown out of these clauses.

Act of 2013 against Sexual harassment of women at work (prevention, prohibition, and redress)

This Indian legislative measure aims to safeguard women from sexual harassment at the workplace. The Act's goals are to protect women from sexual harassment at work, to prevent and address accusations of

sexual harassment, and to deal with issues that are related to such complaints. It addresses the infringement of a woman's fundamental rights to equality under the Constitution of India's articles 14 and 15, as well as her right to life and to a dignified existence under article 21 and her right to engage in any profession or carry on any occupation, trade, or business, including a right to own property. The Indian government recognised the right to a sexually harassment-free environment and the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women on June 25, 1993.

1976 Equal Remuneration Act:

According to the Act, employers have a responsibility to compensate male and female employees equally for comparable or identical labour. No employer may discriminate against women when hiring for the same job or a job that is similar to it, or when imposing terms of employment after hiring, such as promotions, training, or transfers, unless doing so would violate a current law that forbids or restricts the employment of women in that field.

Act of 2017 to Modify Maternity Benefits:

A stage of life, many families anticipate becoming pregnant soon. Pregnancy and childbirth are plans made by many families. Despite how happy and excited the pregnancy is, working women still have anxieties. The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act of 2017 was passed in March of that year to address this issue. Given the current situation, where women make up a preponderant portion of every working environment, maternity leave in India has undergone reform. With the new law, there are a few significant changes:

1. Working women in India now have access to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave instead of the previous 12 weeks.
2. Only people who work for companies with at least 10 workers are eligible to use this law.

In addition, the prenatal leave has been extended from 6 to 8 weeks.

4. A woman who has already had two children is entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave beginning with the third child.
5. A woman is entitled to a 12-week leave if she adopts a kid who is less than three months.

A commissioning mother is also qualified for a 12-week leave term beginning on the day the kid is delivered. The mother who bears the child is referred to as the surrogate mother. A commissioning mother is a "biological" mother who uses her egg to create an embryo that is placed in another woman.

METHODS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUITY:

Women's participation in the workforce can experience a transformational change through four important ways:

1. Reduce the gender gap in household work:

The enormous imbalance between the amount of unpaid care work performed by men and women must first be addressed. The majority of women shoulder three responsibilities at once: job, housework, and childcare. Women need to share household duties with their male counterparts at home in order to increase their employment rates. Changes in social structure are necessary for this. Very important are rules that permit a more flexible approach to working hours and professions, as well as more assistance and investment at the workplace level.

2. Intercession of the government:

The government not only pass laws but also ensure its implementation, take initiatives that improve women's employment chances and access to higher-paying, more skilled occupations. This includes making investments easily accessible, publicly supported healthcare services, ensuring strict adherence to the Maternity Benefits Act in public, private, organised and unorganised sector.

3. Using the rule of law and human values to lessen violence and harassment:

Thirdly, sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence are unacceptable and need to be handled, particularly when novice advocates are placed under senior advocates and when women are placed under men for research guidance, men tend to misuse the power and authority. The practice of victimising the victim should be stopped, the victims' identities and dignity must be safeguarded and the legal procedures of filing complaint should be made simple so that more women will come forward to file complaints. The ILO's Convention against Violence and Harassment offers a clear framework and useful activities in this regard. Every nation should prioritise ratifying and putting into effect the Violence and Harassment Convention.

The eradication of harassment and violence against women won't come from laws alone; it will come through embracing human principles that treat people of all genders with respect and decency. Efforts should be taken to build value -based society by infusing values, education and practices that promotes gender equity to the next generation in their early age.

4. Encourage women's leadership:

Women's representation and leadership need to be encouraged. Engagement of women in higher positions and in organised sector should be geared. Women's participation in setting up new high investment ventures to be encouraged. To permanently address persistent gender discrepancies, discrimination in hiring and promotion must be eliminated, and affirmative action must be taken into consideration.

The World Economic Forum lists five measures to achieve gender equity in the workplace: make a longer shortlist when hiring; eliminate the gender pay gap; use skills-based assessments; have women mentor over men; and prioritise work-life balance.

CONCLUSION

In order to achieve gender equality in the workplace, a "quantum leap" is needed, not cautious, gradual advancement. Governments, labour unions, business organisations, women's groups, educational institutions, and each and every one of us must all do our share. Inherent skills of women such as decision making, problem solving, multi- tasking and hard working can be better used in the workplace. Without gender equality in society, gender equality in the workplace is impossible. Every woman is a mother, and it is the responsibility of the mothers to instil in their boys a sense of gender equality at a young age, this will help us to take a big leap. Every country is working hard to achieve gender parity in the workplace, and our decisions should help us get there.

“You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own”

-Obama, Michelle.