

## Gender Discrimination at workplace: Impact on women

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### Abstract

The present study aims at highlighting the gender discrimination at workplace. Gender discrimination may occur in many forms. Even though every country agrees that it should be abolished yet it is a huge matter for us to resolve. The attitude shown by higher authorities was inclined in most of the gender discrimination cases (male, female, transgender) This attitude makes an inimical working environment for victims which results in stress and lack of impetus in victims. Gender inequality is a critical and obstinate problem, especially in developing countries. This paper argues that gender discrimination is an unproductive practice. We model gender discrimination as the complete lapse of females from the labor market or as the elimination of females from managerial positions.

Keywords - Gender discrimination, inimical working environment, unproductive practice, managerial positions

### *INTRODUCTION*

Discrimination is an unjust or detrimental treatment given to different categories of people, especially on the earth of race, age, or sex defines gender discrimination. It is the exercise of treating one person or group of people indifferently than other people or groups. In plain English, to "discriminate" means to distinguish, single out, or make a distinction. ... But in the context of civil rights law, unlawful discrimination refers to unfair or unequal treatment of an individual (or group) based on certain characteristics, including: Age, Disability and Ethnicity.

"Discrimination may be described as a distinction, whether intentional or not but based on grounds relating to personal characteristics of the individual or group, which has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on such individual or group not imposed upon others, or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits, and advantages available to other members of society. Distinctions based on personal characteristics attributed to an individual solely on the basis of association with a group will rarely escape the charge of discrimination, while those based on an individual's merits and capacities will rarely be so classed." **Andrews v Law Society** (1989) 1 SCR 143

"Every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of his human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, colour, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age except as provided by law, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, a handicap or the use of any

means to palliate a handicap. *Discrimination* exists where such a distinction, exclusion or preference has the effect of nullifying or impairing such right."

## GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Gender inequality is the notion and circumstances that women and men are not equal. Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of personages wholly or partly due to their gender. Women lag behind men in many spheres, including education, labor market prospects and political depiction.

Gender inequality can be defined as allowing people different opportunities due to alleged differences based merely on issues of gender. It is the injurious treatment of an individual or group on the basis of gender. Gender inequality and discrimination are generally conferred as concerning to women, but anyone can experience gender-based inequality or discrimination.

## GENDER DISCRIMINATION AT WORKPLACE

Gender Discrimination at the workplace is a massive problem even in the current modern world. Gender discrimination takes place when a person is treated in his job on the basis of his sex. The problem is increasing everywhere in a rapid form. Some of the things are very problematic for women like relocating to different place whether nationally or internationally, firing from job, promotion and pay appraisals. Women are still regarded as the primary caregivers in most of the families, the amount of time they can devote to their job may not be considered adequate for them to get the same paybacks as men. Government has made several laws to finish it but even a developed country like USA couldn't exterminate this problem till today. It is unfair if a company doesn't provide equal opportunities to the employees. Sometimes men can also be the victims of inequality. Many cases have been observed at both the sectors whether the sector is private or government. Even the transgender are also the target of this acumen. The scenario of gender discrimination varies according to salaries, facilities, working conditions, promotion opportunities and hiring norms based on the gender of the employee.

## GENDER DISCRIMINATION EXAMPLES

**1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS-** The process for interview is the same for both the genders but the interview questions are not similar for both. Women are usually asked with the questions if they have children or want to intend the children. These types of questions are not worthy to ask and do not deal with one's ability. Employers need to ask same questions from male gender too. However, many employers establish hiring potential employees on the concept that females might need to consume maternity leave. In this case, they should consider that fathers need to take paternity leave too. None of the gender should be asked such questions.

**2. SEXUAL HARRASMENT-** Sexual harassment also lies under the roof of gender discrimination. It is not mandatory that women harasser can be a man only. Sometimes it can be

the other woman too. Similarly, the harasser cannot be necessarily a boss, it can be a co-worker or client and the company does not put any effort to halt this harassment.

**3. PROFESSIONAL OBSTACLES-** The highest paying companies or workplaces are dominated by men especially in India when it comes to earnings. Men still dominate the highest paying companies. On an average, women are earning 75% of the men's earning for the same work assigned to them. At this stage, it could take 40 years to overcome from gender inequality.

**4. UNEQUAL PAY-** Women have been taking or receiving only a portion of men's pay for the same work. Salaries are not equally distributed. It has been observed by the U.S. Census Bureau that women need to work for extra 44 days in order to make the same earning as earned by men. Women work longer to get promoted to have the same access while men are promoted earlier with high salaries.

**5 TERMINATIONS-** Terminations are handled with gender bias only since last many years. Terminations are especially prevalent in male dominating companies such as manufacturing companies. Women are not given the priority and are terminated without any prior information. A female engineer at luxury car manufacturer Tesla, AJ Vandermeiden, accused the manufacturer of ignoring her complaints of sexual harassment and paying her less than her male counterparts.

Then, she was fired in what her lawyer alleged was an act of revenge. Vandermeiden, who went public, also claimed she was taunted and catcalled by male employees and that Tesla failed to put her complaints about the harassment, unequal pay, and discrimination. This is just one example. Most people aren't as daring as Vandermeiden was to speak up for dread of an imperfect work record and/or a bad status in their industry.

**6. DIMINSHED RESPONSIBILITIES-** It has been found that discrimination is also done on the basis of responsibilities assigned to the workers at workplace. If a female worker is found unloading the servers from the truck, she is stopped by male members as if she is physically weak or doesn't have the potential of doing these tasks. But it is surprised to discover that some women can deadlift more than men. This kind of example shows that generally discrimination is accepted. If male and female have the same qualifications then we need not to discriminate them on any of the basis.

**7. RESTROOMS AND ACCOMODATIONS-** The next problem comes from the accommodations provided to employees at their workplace. The restrooms or washrooms are not hygienic or are rarely cleaned. Single rooms are being built for the employees (male and female). Women feel highly uncomfortable to use those dirty restrooms, so they are told to go somewhere to the neighboring place where they feel unsafe and when they bring the matter to the boss, he simply ignores it or instruct the female employee to clean the room by herself.

**8. POSITION BIAS-** This is one of the major points of inequality in regard with workplace. The job of receptionist and secretaries are often given to females. Gender should not be considered

when it comes to any post. Instead of gender, skill should be considered while hiring any employee. All applicants should be given the opportunity.

**9. PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION-** A female candidate is often asked if she intends to have children but questions like these should not be raised as it does not tell about the skills and abilities of the person. At that time, she has the fear in her mind that if she says yes, that job will be passed to some other employee as the interviewer might think that she would ask for the maternity leave during her working tenure.

### **IMPLICATIONS:**

As we have considered earlier, there are various factors which creates inequitable scenario among women. Promotional bias, unequal pay, work responsibilities are some of the issues. Women have to encounter many problems when they enter at the workplace. On the other side of coin, men also face many challenges too. However, no effort is put to decline the gender discrimination at workplace.

Even though some laws are implemented to reduce the discrimination yet no country has managed to wipe out this discrimination entirely. USA has implemented some laws for it to escape women from such kind of behavior.

**Civil rights act of 1964** – Govt. of USA has enacted this law on July 2, 1964 which ended with isolation in public places and prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin, is regarded one of the uttermost legislative accomplishment of the civil rights movement.

**Equal credit opportunity law** – This law was enacted on 28 October, 1974 which disallow creditors from discerning against credit applicants on the source of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age because an applicant receives income from a public support program, or an applicant has in good faith exercised any right under the Consumer Credit Protection Act.

**Equal pay act** – In USA, this law came into existence on 10 June, 1963. It focused at eradicating wage gap based on caste, color, creed and sex. It is illegal in USA to charge different wages to men and women for the same type of work. It is based on the concept that equal pay should be given for equal work.

**Pregnancy discrimination act** – This act comes under sex discriminations. This act forbids employers of the company or any organization to discriminate among workers based on medical issues, pregnancy or childbirth etc. Companies with 15 or more people are subject to this law.

**Family and medical leave act** – Family and medical leave act of 1993 states that an employee who has worked for his employer for 12 months would be eligible for taking 12 weeks of unpaid leave. It applies to all the companies, schools or organizations where the number of employees is 50 or more in number. The reason of granting this leave can be for taking care of new born,

serious health condition of an employee or to take care of any new member of family, be it a spouse or child.

Although these laws are implemented in USA, still there are many complaints about gender inequality at workplace. So in order to remove them gradually, there are some remedial measures:

1. Spreading awareness about gender inequality at workplace.
2. Some new laws should be made to put a stop to the sufferers of gender discrimination.
3. Inspection on daily basis by any independent authority of private and government sector.
4. Executing tough monitoring practice at work areas.

### **Role of media in prohibition of gender discrimination:**

Media and gender implies to the relationship between media and gender. The role of media isn't limited upto film, journalism, television etc. Media should also put some efforts in decreasing gender disparity in various countries. A large number of women are working in media profession with major power positions. Half of the video gamers in their industry are women only but even then their presence is limited although their contribution is at large scale.

Media is becoming more influential these days and an important part of everyone's daily life. Indian media needs to sensitize the issue of gender discrimination and focus on women issued in a decisive manner as their role is injurious for empowerment of women.

**Social Awareness-** Media plays a vital role in transferring the messages to people from committees about the current scenario prevailing in a democratic country like India. Media is the only source which can become the pillar of society and can display the reality to people. Media can spread awareness among the people about the rights of male and female. In addition, it can do a lot to decrease the gender inequality.

**Collaborative intervention** – Media should follow their rules and regulations before they appear in front of people to present one's personal life. Media should not intervene for personal attention. They should not be confused about the evidences which are related to discrimination (men and women)

**Stand against gender based violence** – Discrimination is done at every stage with people. It is from infancy to childhood, childhood to adulthood, adulthood to old age. Here is the need of media to stand with people and against discrimination. It is their moral duty to provide the justice to victim and to spill the beans.

**Sensitiveness about serious issues** – India is known as “Land of Rapists “these days. The main source to uncover the truth is one and only media. People engaged with media are not required to spread the false rumours and highlighting them. They need not to comment on serious cases. Justice should be given to the victim whether male or female whereas punishment according to

the crime should be given to rapist or the person who has committed the crime. Media should be gender- friendly. It should not favor only male- dominated party.

**Self control before publishing the message-** In a democratic country, every person has the right to present his or her views. But no one should take the benefit of it. Censor board must check the news before it gets publish in newspaper, magazine. Such news should be highly prohibited which is supporting gender disparity of both men and women.

**Changing view of equal value** – Being the pillar of society, media has the tendency to change people’s mentality on gender discrimination. Media should promote the values in people about equality of men and women.

**Correct information-** The social responsibility of media is to address folks with correct information. Media is regarded as the central hub to the society. People generally believe what they hear. So the correct information should be imparted to the audience without discrimination between men and women.

### **Conclusion:**

Gender Discrimination at the workplace is inconsiderate conduct set to employees based on their gender. Over the years, society has given lower place to women than men. Since decades, women have fought for equality across the globe. Various types of discrimination occurs in workplace such as unequal pay, inequality in hiring process, sexual harassment , pregnancy issues, unjust terminations, position bias etc. Most of the times, women become the main target of gender discrimination especially in countries like India. However, some laws are implemented in USA and some other countries too which safeguard the victims of gender discrimination to some extent.

Gender inequality leaves major footprints on victim’s mind. Stress, future insecurity, insomnia, inner tortures are some of the impacts of gender discrimination. Media can also play a vital role in eradicating this problem from its root. It can make the people aware about the actual right and wrong happening in the country. Media should stand beside the gender based violence.

Implementing laws in each country, daily inspections at workplaces, executing tough monitoring, spreading awareness and strict punishments are a way out to remove the gender inequality.

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