

Gender Bigotry: Indian Women Through the Lens of Prejudice in the Corporate World

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Abstract- Far along liberalization in the 1990s, India has observed a development in the number of educated middle-class women in vocations. Nevertheless, there are few womenfolk in leadership designations and executive bodies. While the former notion of the idyllic woman as homemaker has been swapped by one which venerates women of substance, a woman's role in the household continues to be crucial and is even viewed as essential in defining Indian culture. This paper analytically aims to study the discrepancy between gender inequality and employee motivation. Also, this paper will analyse how and to what extent gender inequalities are reproduced in the organizations and ultimately affecting the motivation of the employees. Correspondingly, this paper also intends to emphasize on the fact that in the recent years, officialdoms these days are moving towards multiplicity which means women and subgroups will play a bigger role in the workplace than in the former years and it will be more important to keep them employed at their optimum level if triumph is intended in the future.

Keywords – Gender Inequality, Prejudice, Productivity, Discrimination, Motivation, Glass-Ceiling, Harassment, Bigotry.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination is one of the foremost social problems all over the world. Narrow down to corporate world, Gender Inequality is a complex phenomenon that can be seen in organizational structures, processes, and practices. There is no ambiguity to say that gender biasness is a very real and concrete problem that is being faced by organizations and more importantly women in our social order. It is significant to note that gender discrimination takes place not only at the workplace but in every arena for a common Indian woman. As we move towards development a unified effort is required and everyone has to do his/her bit. Women need to be regarded as equals by men from the beginning so that they can get good edification and pursue good careers in the coming future.

When being accosted by pressure from everywhere, it is very threatening for the woman to carry out her routine activities and work at her full. Most of us wake up in the morning, go to college or our respective job and act in ways that are more or less our own. We retort to the atmosphere around and the public in it with little thought as to what makes us do such things e.g., Why we relish some activities more than others? Why we find some frivolous activities better than others? The answer to this is; all these actions are driven by something i.e., Motivation. Hence, Motivation is stipulated as the forces either within (intrinsic) or external (extrinsic) to a person that provokes determination and hankering towards completing a given course of action.

Similarly, Employee motivation affects efficiency and the duty of a manager is to channel motivation towards the accomplishment of organizational goals. Thus, a manager has to study that what motivates his employees and what inspirations their choice of action. Furthermore, why they kept it going on in that action over time. So, the way people are treated in the companies deeply affects how they will perform at the workstation.

Generally, discrimination is treating of employees based on standards that are not job related, these may include race, colour, gender, background, culture and religion. Gender discrimination against someone will obviously affect his/her productivity and this study is envisioned to prove how intensely the two are associated to each other.

II. STUDY OBJECTIVES

- (i) To study remuneration differences between men and women employed on equal level in the Corporate world.
- (ii) To study how difficult, it is for a woman to get promoted in a workplace.
- (iii) To study how behaviour of supervisors differs from males to females.
- (iv) To study whether the working environment psychologically suitable for a woman to work in on a long-term basis.
- (v) To study the ways of harassment takes place for a woman in her workplace and who is the main harasser.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender discrimination and harassment in the workplace is a topic of massive importance as they have been under dialogue for over more than an era. Many studies and researches have been steered to explore on the different aspects of this topic, to correlate and identify the various variables from within the studies to contribute to the society in a direct or an indirect way. The areas of research on this topic in the past focuses on Law, employee motivation, job satisfaction, employee turnover, organizational costs, social responsibility and corporate culture providing insights into many factors influenced by gender discrimination and harassment. Almost all the studies focus on problem faced by women from within the organization and social external factors involving discrimination and effecting productivity.

Studies have shown that people have protection against this danger of discrimination and harassment but its effectiveness is always confronted and debated for over some time. Law and justice are always closely looked upon when it comes to harassment at work place. In regard to this, a study “Gender-Based Harassment and the Hostile Work Environment” (Joshua F. Thrope) tests whether non-sexually motivated gender discrimination is as serious a factor in creating a hostile working environment as sexually motivated gender discrimination. This study illustrates Sexual harassment is only a part of gender discrimination that female employees face in a hostile work employment. Ridicule, rudeness or insults directed at working women may not be sexually driven but may still create an unfriendly working environment. The failure of courts to view gender-based harassment claims as actionable has reduced the availability and deterred the effectiveness of Labour Rights. The study claims that in order to recognise gender-based bigotry as actionable it must be severe or unescapable or it could be misinterpreted.

Impacts and consequences have been explored in many previous findings and emphasis have been given on the nature of harassment, but from within harassment sexual harassment is the concept which is quite highlighted factor discussed in findings as in, “Recent Thinking about Sexual Harassment: A Review Essay” (Elizabeth Anderson) discusses the wrongs of sexual harassment and presents three theories that apprehends a different aspect of sexual harassment. Dignity theory elucidates the offensiveness of harassment; autonomy theory deals with the intimidating nature of sexual conduct whereas equality theory highlights the group-based harms of sexual aggravation. This article also gives a specimen of airlines that expect female flight attendants to endure customer’s anger, rudeness or gazing without any objection and hence, make it difficult for them to execute their duties satisfactorily. The essay also attempts to provide remedies and explains that anti-discrimination law has been fairly useful in helping employees understand their rights and combat sexual harassment in the workplace.

The influence of sexual harassment in a lawful career on job satisfaction is analysed in “The Effects of Sexual Harassment on Job Satisfaction, Earnings, and Turnover among Female Lawyers” (David N. Lab and Bernard F. Lentz). According to statistics shown in the study, job gratification among female employees is affected more than twice as strongly by sexual harassment than by their annual income. The study also infers that there is a direct relation between sexual harassment and purpose to quit existing employment. However, the study was limited by the fact that the survey did not refer to the degree of harassment.

The study “Gender Justice and Its Critics” by Neal Devins concentrate on the judicial practices and laws on gender discrimination. The article underlines the outdated treatment of women and the current condition of women. Women were mistreated by the laws made to protect them by giving decision making authorities to the male members. The writer states that in contrast to these laws, the counteractive laws such as ‘prohibition of sex-based discrimination in workplace’ have empowered women to make their own decisions. Furthermore, Gender Justice claims that it is not divergent to the needs of employed mothers but offers that parental assistances be given to both males and females.

The study “The Price of ‘Man’ and ‘Women’: A Hedonic Pricing Model of Avatar Attributes in a Synthetic World” (Edward Castronova 2003) examines the claim of physical traits and qualities of the social world. The study examines the computer-generated embodiments which are both male and female. However, the hedonic price scrutiny suggests that the female avatars are accessible at a discount and that there is less fondness to have a female avatar. As this physical difference is not real in the unreal world, this disinclination can be explained by the general assumption about the efficacy of the female avatar.

There were shortcomings and left out concerns in those previous studies which can be looked upon on the basis of few factors and introducing more quantifiable representations which could relate and interlink the aspects in appropriate and a durable way.

IV. DIFFERENT ANGLES FROM A LENS

4.1 Gender, Supremacy and Beyond

To elucidate gender discrimination at workplace, many sociologists draw on Joan Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organizations. Acker contended that gender discrimination is resolute because it is constructed into the edifice of work officialdoms (Acker 1990). Employers prefer to employ people with few commotions outside of work who can devotedly devote themselves to the organization. This penchant eliminates many women, given the prospect that they hold prime care responsibilities for family. Subsequently, for many proprietors the "ideal worker" is a man (see also Williams 2001).

Acker (1990) further identified five processes that reproduce gender in organizations: the division of labour, cultural symbols, workplace interactions, individual identities, and organizational logic. The organizational logic was at the emphasis of Acker's unique critique of gendered organizations (Acker 1990). It incorporates the logical systems of work rules, job descriptions, pay scales, and job evaluations that administer bureaucratic organizations. Acker describes organizational logic as the taken-for-granted policies and principles that managers use to exert authentic control over the workplace. Employees obey because they view these policies and principles as natural business norms and practices.

Acker's discovery identified it as a source of gender discrimination, even though it seems gender unbiased on the surface. She writes: "Rational-technical, ostensibly gender neutral, control systems are built upon and conceal a gendered substructure. . . in which men's bodies fill abstract jobs. Use of such abstract systems continually reproduces the underlying gender assumptions and the subordinated or excluded place of women." (Acker, 154) For example, organizations purportedly use logical principles to develop job descriptions and determine pay rates. But Acker argues that managers often resort to gender stereotypes when enterprising these tasks, privileging qualities associated with men and masculinity that then become unfold in organizational pyramids. Through organizational logic, therefore, gender discourses are entrenched in organizations, and gender disparity at work results.

4.2 Ableism Affects Motivation

This paper basically lays emphasis on how employee motivation and productivity get effected by ableism in workplace and how different variables effects under different environment. Wentling in "Women in middle management: Their career development and aspirations, Business Horizons" (1992) states that even though women are accomplishing career positions in corporations but they continue to have problems reaching senior level management positions. Consequently, hiring, developing, and promoting women into leadership positions can translate into one of the most useful tactics that an organization can adopt, to succeed in an increasingly globalized and competitive economy (Conger, 1999; Adler, Brody, & Osland, 2000).

The majority of females' headship positions in the business world, are in combat zone to middle management spots and while there may appear to be progress made, the majority of senior executive positions continues to be subjugated by males (Mattis, 2001; Wentling, 1992). Mattis (2001) argues that mentors and paragons can have a great effect in supporting women in instigating and sustaining initiatives that can hold and advance them up the corporate structure.

To make above statements an issue of concern, COO of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg says, "We need women at all levels, including the top, to change the dynamic, reshape the conversation, to make sure women's voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored." As women have entered into the labour force, moving up in the administrative structure has been a relatively deliberate process. Women of colour face additional challenges of racism advancing in the corporate world (Catalyst, 2001). Women in leadership positions have much to offer and add multiplicity and balance to the leadership realm by adding the skills of their correlative peer (Coughlin, Wingard & Hollihan, 2005).

4.3 Why is there a Gender Biasness in the Organisations?

It is unequivocal to assert that, these days everyone is all about Multiplicity & Inclusion. Still, the numbers tell a different story to us. It looks like we want to bring more womenfolk in management, but we don't really know how to execute that. There's a long history of gender imbalance in India. One of the main reasons for this gender inequity is that we're tied to old conducts. For history, C-suite ranks are held by menfolk and in certain trades, such as tech or manufacturing, the incongruity is even more noticeable.

According to Michelle Obama, "No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of the contributions of half of its citizens." Suppose for an engineering position, customarily, there have always been more male job claimants for a role like this, so unsurprisingly these male candidates get employed and sooner or later promoted to executive roles.

Even if now things have changed and more womenfolk choose to study engineering and web development, it's still hard for them to enter this men-governing space. And when they enter, they come across a dead-end. For men, the career path seems pre-determined; their (male) managers have already showed the way. But how can women compete with their male colleagues who are already in path of becoming bosses? Most prominently, how can they advance their careers if no one's encouraging them and if there are no other female leaders who can set the example?

4.4 Unequal Wages Based on Gender Leads to Demotivation

As per an authentic report in 2019, India had been ranked 108th in World Economic Forum (WEF) gender gap index, same as 2017, while recording improvement in wage equality for similar work and fully closing its tertiary education gender gap for the first time. But, if we look into the depths of the corporate world, a number of loopholes will come to the surface. Taking justify the statement, Hollywood Actress Patricia Arquette in her Oscars acceptance speech, highlighted the need to close the wage gap in all industries by saying that, "It's our time to have wage equality once and for all, and equal rights for women in the United States of America." The hour need of the issue is to extirpate the various wage gap from their roots.

Taking another instance in regard to highlight the issue; it was March 5, 2018, when Frances McDormand during her Oscar acceptance speech for Best Actress sent an influential message: "Women have ideas and, to put those ideas into action, they need a seat at the table." This message goes beyond Hollywood and the film industry; women in the workplace today should be equal with their male counterparts. And it's not just about representation for the sake of it; it's not about conspicuous gender balance in numbers. Undeniably, that's a good flinch. But, to intricate on McDormand's point, what's even more significant is to bring gender balance in equal pay, leadership roles, in the decision-making process and in the strategic part of the business. An American Politician namely, Mike Honda also of the same opinion, "Equal pay isn't just a women's issue; when women get equal pay, their family income rise and the whole family benefits."

4.5 Comatose Bias is Ubiquitous

We do have some Pigeon-holes in our society, for example:

- "Men are more assertive than women, that's why they request and get a promotion more often."
- "After a certain age, women will struggle to balance family needs with the requirements of a senior position."
- "Women are more sensitive, thus not able to handle the pressure that goes with leadership."
- "Men are more influential, tough and decisive comparable to women; thus, they deserve advancements before-hand."
- "Men are more active, logical, analytical and independent; thus, they secure their promotions and increments."

According to Nelson Mandela, "Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all kinds of oppression." Aforementioned generalizations and stereotypes have a worse impact on the way women are treated in the workplace. We're persuaded to think that women are not capable of handling their management responsibilities, instead of creating a work-life balanced milieu for all employees or instead of building up those necessary management skills among our high-potential staff, irrespective their gender.

4.6 Ageism in the Workplace

Discrimination because of age is one of the great catastrophes of modern life. The desire to work and to be productive is what makes one's life worthy and it's bad to be told that one's efforts are not needed because one is at the wrong age for the work. An influential American singer, Madonna Ciccone has rightly said in this regard, "We have made so many advances in other areas-civil rights, gay rights, labour rights-ageism is still an area that's taboo." Prejudice on the basis of age is also a common issue specifically for women. They're often overlooked for a promotion under the postulation that they might get pregnant soon or they may get marry soon (Vocation like: Air Hostess). Or, they're not easily given a chance to move their career forward and take on challenging tasks once they return at work after a short break.

According to Maya Angelou, "Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible." Basically, age doesn't have a reality except in the physical world. It will be hard to believe that the big age problem in the corporate world today is really on the part of employers and they even don't seem to be scheming the cost of ageism to them when they practice it.

According to Claude Pepper, "Ageism is as odious as racism and sexism." For instance, the middle-aged woman is hired because she can do a lot, but the old-aged woman is not hired because she cannot do as much as the young; however, the old has more experience than the young. This is directly posing a question on the Ageism conduct by the employer. Ageism can end up in significant legal costs, settlements and compensation paid to avoid defending the age discrimination claim. Furthermore, such discrimination can result in failure to consider skills-based potential, abilities and experience in the workplace. As a consequence, age discrimination can unfavourably affect an individual and his or her employment opportunities, regardless of their age.

4.7 The Ripple Effect-A Resolution

A business tycoon, Carlos Ghosn is of the opinion, "Hiring and promoting talented women is the right thing to do for society- and it's an economic imperative." The swiftest way to fix the lack of women in leadership roles is to employ women in leadership roles. Affirmative actions will bring the results and will also have a long-term impact. Suppose hiring one woman in a top position raises the total number of females with a senior-level job by one. But in the future, this woman is probable to hire and encourage more women too. So, ultimately, that number will go even higher and higher.

There will be two motives behind this. Firstly, that woman will be able to better recognize the capability of her companions and can be a promoter for them. She will also understand how her team can get advantage from gender equity. Secondly, she will act as an exemplar for other women who might be otherwise more diffident to apply for a job at an all-men team. Seeing a woman at the helm, they get the idea that this specific company values women and gives them a chance to grow more. Commissioner of Human Rights namely, Carmelyn P. Malalis has truly asserted, "We advocate for equal treatment for all employees, regardless of who they are, the color of their skin, where they were born, who they love, and other characteristics that contribute to a strong, diverse workforce." Ultimately, this will give an opportunity to those women or employees who are deprived of any of the biasness or discrimination.

4.8 Managerial Apprehensions:

A person who feels appreciated will always do more than what is expected and when someone in the workplace is adjudicated, evaluated, judged or given a wage based on standards which are not job related, discrimination occurs. This discernment leads to the employee demotivation because he/she knows that no matter what amount of hard work they do, they will be rewarded on the basis of criteria which are not at all job related. The biggest worry for any organisation should be when their most zealous people become inaudible.

The gap in motivation is mainly because of differences in characteristics of the jobs carried out, the labour market experience they bring to the job and discriminatory treatment of women by employers or co-workers. Without a motivated workplace, organisations could be placed in a very hazardous position. Motivated employees can lead to amplified efficiency and allow an organisation to achieve advanced levels of output. That is why, it is very crucial to motivate the employees to get the desired results for the organisation.

V. CONCLUSION

In the words of Indian Actress Frieda Pinto, “Gender Equality is a human right, not a female right.” To make a suitable change in the corporate world, gender balance is must needed in the workplace, and specifically in leadership roles. If you don’t support those women, then they won’t be able to make a change in the organization. If you don’t support career growth for the rest of your women who now hold an entry-level position, then soon you’ll face gender disparity again.

Employee motivation is the ultimate currency. Here, in the words of Maya Angelou the question rises, “How important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes and she-roes?” The answer to this is if we want to resolve gender inequality in the workplace, we have to fight the problem at its roots. The employers need to take care of their employees by implementing company-wide policies that promote equity, they need to train executives and employees across all levels on biases and they need to engage the “privileged” group – men – in discussions on why gender equality is vital because loyal employees are assets- not liabilities.

All the objectives mentioned in the study have proved that there is a direct association between gender discrimination and employee motivation. The human resource managers should provide facilities and provision of goods according to the proportion of male and female. They should give recognition, regular feedback, monetary gains, promotions on merit and seniority wise, friendly competition and additional responsibility to the employees. To achieve gender equality, it requires the involvement of women, men, boys and girls because it is everyone’s responsibility.

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