



## Gender Equality in the workplace

### Description

#### Theme :-

Gender Inequality in the workplace is a very prevalent phenomenon in India. And women are the victims of it. But there are a lot of misnomers, wrong assumptions, and inferences that need to be taken into account to analyze the issue objectively.

#### Gender Pay Gap :-

- Women below the age of 30 earned 23.07% less than men, while those in the age group of 30-40 years earned 30.24% less than men. The gender pay gap in India for the year 2013 was recorded at 24.81% by WageIndicator, and a curious stat is that this gap increases with age.
- The above statistics are somewhat misleading. Several important variables have been lost while arriving at a common average. By closer scrutiny of the data, it can be easily seen that the total number of employed men is greater than the total number of employed women. Also, more women are employed in lower paying jobs. For example, nurses, teachers, call center operators, etc. This skews the data and a wrong inference is usually drawn out.
- Talking about systemic issues, women are paid equally as the men, when they are equally competent and qualified. The argument made that women are paid less even when they have the same level of competence and qualifications is flawed. Had this been the case, all the industries would prefer employing women alone as they would cost lesser to the company for the same services. Anecdotal cases do exist where women are paid less despite all qualifications and competence, but, those can mainly be attributed to the fact that their male counterparts are usually able to negotiate a better salary.

#### Number Disparity :-

- Talking systemically, there are no barriers to the entry of women in any field at present. No company, organization or employer can disqualify a candidate solely because of the



candidate's gender. Any such act would be punishable by law. Only Defence forces did not allow women to be a part of them, but now, even they are increasingly recruiting women.

- The number disparity can clearly be attributed to culture and social constructs. India, still being mostly a conservative nation, there are certain unjustified restrictions on the choices women make. Certain occupations are seen to be unfit for women by society. Such unjustified beliefs need to be abolished.
- The inequality in terms of numbers usually raises the argument that all professions should have a 1:1 ratio of the sexes in terms of numbers. This gives rise to the question of Equality of Opportunity Vs. Equality of Outcome. Equality of opportunity demands that women should be given equal opportunities alongside men, which is a very fair argument. But, what Equality of Outcome demands is that the outcome of the equality offered to women should also be the same i.e, women should be equal to men in numbers in all professions. But, that can never be true. Even if social constructs were lifted, systemic hurdles eliminated and opportunities made equally available women still would make different choices than men.
- Biologically, women are more inclined towards people-centric jobs like nursing, teaching, etc. whereas men are more inclined to things-centric(dealing with physical objects) jobs like construction, demolition, mechanics, etc. When equality of opportunity exists, the above-mentioned factors will still lead to disparity in the outcomes. This can be best explained by the example of Scandinavian countries where Gender Equality is almost ideal. There are no cultural barriers, yet the number disparity problem exists.

### **Childbirth :-**

- Usually, childbirth is one of the key factors influencing a woman's career. Maternity leaves and lesser productivity at the workplace are some of the repercussions of childbirth. But, this also points to a need for change in the culture. Childcare should be shared by the mother and father alike. The role of a caregiver should be shared by both the parents. Some companies are now providing childcare leaves to both parents so that the onus of childcare is shared by the two.

### **Unfair Treatment :-**

- Women are often treated in an unfair manner in workplaces. Again, systemically no discrimination exists as it is prohibited by Law. Only social and cultural constructs for women are the reason behind it.

### **Conclusion :-**

From the above information, it can be clearly seen that systemically, gender equality in the workplace doesn't exist. There are no laws/rules/regulations prohibiting women into any field (except defense). Inequality exists due to social/cultural reasons alone. The cultural and social restrictions placed on women which leads to inequality of opportunity should be dealt with.

### **Your Turn!**



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