



GENDER STEREOTYPING – WAYS TO BRIDGE THE GAP

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Abstract: According to the 'World Inequality Report 2022', India is among the most unequal countries in the world, with rising poverty and an 'affluent elite.' In spite of this some Indian women are global leaders and had carved a niche in diverse fields but most women and girls in India do not enjoy many of their rights due to entrenched patriarchal views, norms, traditions and structures.

In this paper an attempt is made to outline the gender biasness in recruitment- its pros and cons and how to bridge the gap. Paper also focusses on job creditability, gender stereo typing in jobs and changing aspirations.

Keywords: Job Creditability, Gender Stereotyping, Gender Inequality, Job Discrimination, Gender Prejudices, Patriarchal Views.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Indian girls and boys experience adolescence differently where boys tend to experience greater freedom, while girls face extensive limitations on their ability to move freely and to make decisions affecting their work, education, marriage and social relationships. As in any developed nation changing the value of girls has to include men, women and boys. It has to mobilize many sectors in society. Rights of all the girls and the boys will be fulfilled only when society's perception changes. Moreover, across India gender inequality results in unequal opportunities impacting the lives of both the genders. If termed statistically it is the girls that are the most disadvantaged.

According to Global index girls have higher survival rates at birth, but in India is a country where more girls die than boys and are also more likely to drop out of school as well. As per the 'World Inequality Report 2022', India is among the most unequal countries in the world, with rising poverty and an 'affluent elite.'

The report authored by Lucas Chancel and coordinated by renowned economists Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman outlined that the top 10% holds 57% of total national income and top 1% holds 22% in India while the bottom 50% share has gone down to 13%. Although India maintained a consistent performance on gender equality but its rank in this area in legal terms has declined to 124th among 190 countries in 2022 against 123rd a year ago and 117th in 2020, according to an index compiled by a World Bank study.

Some Indian women are global leaders and had carved a niche in diverse fields but most women and girls in India do not enjoy many of their rights due to entrenched patriarchal views, norms, traditions and structures.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW :

In Gender Equality UNICEF INDIA Country Programme response to the identification of deprivations that Indian children face, including gender based deprivations, UNICEF India's 2018-2022 Country Programme has been developed in response to the identification of deprivations. Each programme outcome is committed to a gender equality that is noted explicitly in its programme, budget and results mentioned below:

- **Health Initiatives: In an attempt is made to** reduce excess female mortality under five and support equal care-seeking behaviour for girls and boys. (Example: Front-line workers encourage families of sick baby girls to take to the hospital immediately)
- **Food and Nutrition:** Programme promotes equitable eating practices to improve nutrition of women and girls. (Example: In their village zone the women cooperatives develop and implement their own micro-plans for improved nutrition)
- **Education to all:** Programme enables more gender-responsive curricula and pedagogy by providing gender responsive support to enable out-of-school girls and boys to learn quickly. (Example: Overhaul of textbooks so that the language, images and messages do not perpetuate gender stereotypes and implementing new strategies for identifying vulnerable out of school girls and boys)



- **Child protection:** UNICEF India Country Programme ends child and early marriage (Example: Village panchayats in this support to become “child-marriage free” by facilitating girls and boys clubs and teach girls sports, photography, journalism and other non-traditional activities to develop their skill and knowledge)
- **Cleanliness:** Orienting girls to menstrual hygiene management, including well-equipped separate toilets in schools (Example: Implementing Gender guidelines from Swacch Bharat Mission which support states to implement MHM policy)
- **Policy for cash transfer and women in leadership:** UNICEF India Country Programme support state governments to develop gender-responsive cash transfer programmes and also women’s leadership in local governance. (Example: Cash transfer programme in West Bengal to enable girls to stay in school, Resource Centre for women panchayat leaders in Jharkhand)
- **UNICEF India Country Programme for Disaster risk reduction:** To enable greater gender disaggregation of information management for disaster risk reduction and more leadership and participation of women and girls UNICEF India Country Programme was made. (Example: Increasing the participation of women in Village Disaster Management Committees)

In addition, three cross-cutting themes will support all outcomes:

- **Joint C4D-Gender strategy:** UNICEF’s Communication for Development (C4D) team develops social and behaviour change communication to support each outcome. These communications prioritize efforts to change negative gender norms like unequal feeding, unequal investment in young girls and boys, harmful MHM practices and perpetuation of lower value of girls than boys through wedding dowry.
- **Advocating for and promoting equal value of girls:** UNICEF’s Communications, Advocacy and Partnerships team works with media, influencers and gamechangers to advocate for UNICEF priorities in which the 2018-2022 programme provides Equal Value of Girls and Boys.
- **Increasing and improving girls’ and women’s safe mobility:** UNICEF India has begun to work in some states on new programmes with new partners to improve the ability and freedom of women and girls, including access to government services like schools and hospitals.

McKinsey study on women closing the Gender gap outlined that although the gender gap is diminishing, still women only make 84 cents for every dollar than their male counterparts. As a business leader, organisations can help close the gender gap by creating fair and transparent hiring, compensation, evaluation, and promotion policies. Bridging the gender gap can improve employee engagement, retention, financial returns and innovation. According to it, over the past few years, especially since the start of the pandemic, corporate America has made important progress improving women’s representation but there is still more progress to be made. The research shows that women are underrated at every level, and women of color are the most underrated group of all, lagging behind white men, men of color and white women. The study revealed that the underrepresentation of women in high-status roles isn’t due to lack of education or attrition rates.

Mandy Price, co-founder and CEO of Kanarys Inc., a platform that gathers and analyzes cultural and demographic data to help organizations build more inclusive work cultures witnessed the inequality and lack of action that society still suffers from today. Price said that the current gender gap should serve as a wake-up call to our business leaders.

Despite increased publicity and discussions on the inequalities women face in the workplace, there remains a tremendous amount of work to be done to diminish the gender gap. **This article is an attempt to bridge the gender gap in the workplace for business owners, managers and employees.**

3. DISCUSSION :

NOTE 1: - Job Creditability- Men Vs Women

A 2017 study published in the American Sociological Review found that a profession that’s considered a “woman’s” job is perceived as less credible than a “male’s” job. examining a relatively gender-neutral profession business loan managers for a Central American bank.

The study while examining a business loan manager for a Central American bank found that customers paired with female managers were more likely to miss payments than the borrowers paired with male loan managers. Moreover, when those paired with female managers during the study were switched to a different manager, noncompliance rates remained the same, regardless of the second manager’s gender. Apparently, all it took was knowing one person of an occupation to assign it a gender, and when that gender was female, the occupation was taken less seriously.

Though companies now invest heavily in mentoring and developing their best female talent, all that attention doesn’t translate into promotions. A Catalyst survey of over 4,000 high potentials shows that more women than men

have mentors yet women are paid \$4,600 less in their first post-MBA jobs, hold lower-level positions, and feel less career satisfaction.

More sponsoring may lead to more and faster promotions for women, but it is not a magic bullet. There is still much to do to bridge the gap between men's and women's advancement. Some improvements such as supportive bosses and inclusive cultures are a lot harder to mandate than formal mentoring programs but essential if those programs are to have their intended effects. Clearly, however, the critical first step is to stop overmentoring and start accountable sponsoring for both men and women.

Note 2: - Changing Aspirations

For all men and women who have diversified their career aspirations, consumer demand is also a driving force of change. There are also advantages in bringing women to upfront as most women are intuitive, creative, trusting, so they quickly understand that working with female investigators can have better success.

The past decade has also seen an increase in the share of middle-aged and older women who views that being successful in a high-paying career or profession is one of the most important things in their lives. To be successful in career people weigh the importance of key aspects of life. For men and women of all ages, being a good parent and having a successful marriage continue to rank significantly higher on their list of priorities than being successful in a high-paying job or career. Thus, the increased importance of women is now placing on their careers at the expense of the importance they place on marriage and family.

Note 3: - Gender Stereotyping in Jobs

The gender discrimination states the gender biasness in recruitment is pervasive and may arise for different reasons, where employers' consciously or unconsciously prefer male candidates.

1. Economic View: - In economic theory, job discrimination is explained by employers' imperfect information on applicants human capital characteristics, which are relevant for the job and also difficult to standardize on a resume (Becker, 1985; Heckman, 1998). Employers use group-level statistical summaries (i.e., group averages) as proxies for these variables, explains why individuals from these group are treated differently. Thus, in selecting candidates for a job opening, employers not only consider the observed and standardizable qualifications shown in candidates' curriculum vitae (CVs), but also rely on stereotypes about the typical level and dispersion of other difficult-to-standardise qualifications. This practice leads to forms of statistical discrimination based on rational assessments of productivity and risk regarding potential employees (Baumle and Fossett, 2005). Qualitative characteristics such as gender and age are used as potential proxies for traits that are difficult and expensive to measure in real terms.

2. Inherited traits: - Some stereotypes based on knowledge of men and women's inherited traits and abilities are descriptive. This knowledge can be direct, based on experience, or indirect and transmitted by trusted third parties. Thus, in our societies, in which there is gender biasness in the division of labour, where men appear as possessing greater leadership and higher aspirations and commitment at work than women and women are assumed to possess greater communal qualities associated with caring behaviors (Cuddy *et al.*, 2004). Other stereotypes are prescriptive, that is, based on cultural beliefs about what men and women ought or ought not to do. They are often justified with reference to higher communal values that reinforce a system of patriarchal authority which favors men (Connell, 1995; Rudman and Glick, 2001). Prescriptions are accompanied by sanctions when someone violates them. Thus, working mothers who behave agentically may be perceived as lacking femininity and be subjected to a variety of sanctions (Connell, 1995; Benard and Correll, 2010).

3. Patriarchal Society views or beliefs: - Sociologists have repeatedly shown how the patriarchal character of organizational life reinforces the idea of separate spheres for women and men, and contributes to the perception that being an 'ideal worker' is incompatible with being a 'good mother' (Fuegen *et al.*, 2004; Ridgeway and Correll, 2004; Benard and Correll, 2010; Glass and Fodor, 2011; Byron and Roscigno, 2014). The ideal worker is the one who is more 'committed' employee and who sacrifices his most personal concerns, such as those derived from family responsibilities, for the sake of his career. He/She is a worker who is expected to drop all current engagements when a new and important work demand arises and devotes many hours to 'face time' at work when needed and can work late nights or on weekends if necessary (Correll *et al.*, 2007).

4. Prescriptive Views or beliefs: - Descriptive stereotypes contribute to the generation of prescriptive views or beliefs about men and women's roles in our society; and prescriptions which lead to the desired outcomes. Hence, it a common notion that under the 'motherhood mandate', women are expected to be more family oriented and less committed to paid work, and thus, less productive than similarly qualified male workers (Russo, 1976; Hays, 1996). According to employers, they are also expected to have higher rates of absenteeism, which, eventually affects their productivity at work (Correll *et al.*, 2007). Employers' expectations may even be harmful to some employees, such as when pregnant women are supposed to appear 'well' and remain at work even when feeling sick (Gatrell, 2011).



According to the theories discussed above, both descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotypes influence recruitment processes. In this we developed two hypotheses to test the possibilities and expect that discrimination against female candidates will be lesser for candidates with higher levels of qualifications for the job. The reduction in the level of employers' discrimination against female candidates will indicate that they allow any perceived handicaps in women to be compensated with candidates' credentials. This will also interpret a reduction in discrimination among applicants with higher standardized qualifications, as evidence that employers engage in statistical discrimination based on descriptive stereotypes or on shared beliefs about the typically different traits and abilities of men and women, which can be offset by the candidates' higher qualifications.

Furthermore, we expect that discrimination against female candidates will be higher for candidates with children. As explained earlier that the change in employers' level of discrimination against women will indicate that they are willing to adapt their stereotypes on women and men's qualifications when receiving further information on candidates' characteristics. However, the increase in discrimination will in this case showcase in their behaviour which is based on prescriptions about the proper roles of men and women in society and punishing non-compliant women with higher discrimination when the stereotype of the good mother and worker is challenged.

Note 4: - Gender Prejudices

Employers, instead of statistically discriminating women, particularly males, may rely on gender prejudices, based on negative feelings about women, that similarly result in higher barriers to women's employment, especially in high-status professions (England, 1994; Jaret, 1995).

Prejudices are negative judgements about groups that carry a stigma. These judgements are irrational because unlike statistical discrimination they are not based on expectations about groups' productivities. It can arise at different stages of an individual's work history (pre-selection, job interview, or promotion), which makes it difficult to tackle the subject empirically (Baumle and Fossett, 2005). Psychologists Hodson and Dhont (2015) in his recent study of this work have shown that prejudicial individuals are more likely to display automatic emotional responses of animosity or antipathy towards members of other groups, based on faulty and inflexible generalizations of their inferior qualities (Allport, 1954). Prejudices are often acquired at an early age and as a consequence, in the case of gender, of segregated socialization (Glick and Hilt, 2000). In other words, if discrimination remains for the group of most competent female candidates this finding is interpreted as evidence for discrimination based on prejudice.

Note 5: - Gender Discrimination in Recruitment Decisions

Gender discrimination evidences are derived from field experiments such as correspondence studies which are considered to be the most reliable methods to reveal unequal treatment in hiring (Riach and Rich, 2002), because, unlike observational studies, they can control for selection effects and problems are more intrinsic. These effects occur, more often in situations where women themselves make employment and occupational choices that lead them to disadvantaged positions (Skyt Nielsen *et al.*, 2004; Sahni and Paul, 2010). While these choices may also respond to the same stereotypes and prejudices affecting employers, or anticipate these attitudes, they can generally only indirectly be attributed to discrimination (Lundberg and Startz, 1983).

In correspondence studies, individuals who have nearly identical resume except for certain traits such as sex when apply for the same jobs their outcome differs due to discrimination. The difficulty in correspondence studies is usually not with sensing discrimination but with identifying its sources stereotypes or prejudices (Neumark *et al.*, 1996). Further adding, in many correspondence studies the experimenter varies the personal characteristics of the fictitious applicants to determine if differences in employers' rates of response vary accordingly between men and women (Larribeau *et al.*, 2013). The experimenter may also vary the parenthood status of the applicant within or across jobs, and ascertain if women are more discriminated against when they have children (Correll *et al.*, 2007; Albert *et al.*, 2011; Bygren *et al.*, 2017). If they are, this is attributed to employers' reliance on prescriptive stereotypes when making hiring decisions, based on beliefs that mothers should not be given a job because their place is at home. In other studies, the marital or age status of the applicant is modified, and used as an indicator of how likely they are to become a parent in the near future (Petit, 2007).

Apparently, in other studies, qualities that are usually unobserved in a CV, like personality traits, are subtly added to candidates' résumés, and employers' reactions are identified and explored to reveal if women who display 'masculine' traits are penalized more than others (Weichselbaumer, 2004). Finally, in some studies what is varied is the level of standardized qualifications of the applicant, in the expectation that employers relying on stereotypes may consider that women's typical handicaps in unobservable traits are smaller (i.e., can be compensated) when they have higher standardizable qualifications perhaps because only women who do not have these handicaps can achieve such higher qualifications (Larribeau *et al.*, 2013). In all cases, what allows distinguishing stereotypical from prejudicial discrimination is employers' disposition to change their hiring decisions against women when applicants' personal

characteristics diverge from gender stereotypical norms. Prejudicial discrimination, in contrast, is residually established as any discrimination left and exercised against the most favoured sub-group of women.

The evidence provided on gender discrimination by correspondence studies in hiring is mixed. A few studies conclude that there is no discrimination (e.g., Albert *et al.*, 2011; Bygren *et al.*, 2017) while others viewed that discrimination occurs only for some subgroups of female applicants, as expected under the hypothesis of statistical discrimination based on stereotypes (Petit, 2007). The study itself suggest that it occurs only in some contexts for some age groups (Albert *et al.*, 2011). Correspondence studies differ also in terms of the contexts that they choose to study. Some are located in countries with strong family policies promoting and facilitating mothers' employment, like Sweden or France (Petit, 2007; Bygren *et al.*, 2017); others in more traditional institutional contexts like Spain (Albert *et al.*, 2011; León and Pavolini, 2014); and still others, in societies with mixed gender equality records, like the United States or the United Kingdom (Neumark *et al.*, 1996; Correll *et al.*, 2007; Larribeau *et al.*, 2013).

Note 6: - Breaking boundaries

In a 2017 study, recruiting company CareerBuilder tracked the percentage of new jobs in gender biased occupations filled by members of the opposite sex. The company found that many male and female dominated fields are now becoming more balanced.

The study found that nearly one-quarter of the new jobs in typically male-dominated occupations of a CEO, lawyer, surgeon, web developer, chemist and producers were filled by women between 2009 and 2017. Overall, 23% of all jobs traditionally held by men were then held by female workers.

In 2021, Catalyst published research showing a similar progression. The study detailed the percentages of women in the workforce of certain sectors. The researchers discovered that women employed in industries consisting of two-thirds men increased by 5% between 2016 and 2018.

4. FINDING AND SUGGESTIONS :

In certain roles usually filled by men or women, the opposite gender remains underemployed. The most recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data on nursing indicate that 12% of registered nurses and 20.8% of elementary school teachers are men.

On a much larger scale, here are other traditionally male-dominated jobs where women now comprise much of the workforce. Like Lawyers, Veterinarians, Commercial and industrial designers, Marketing managers, Optometrists, Management analysts etc.

Following are the few ways to solve this gender problem in the workplace: -

1. To stop viewing female dominated professions as less credible.

Companies also must put their inclusive ideas into practice. For example, companies can send managers reminders about how bias can influence employee evaluations before they write their annual reviews. This practice of naming types of biases can help improve outcomes for women and other people from underrepresented groups.

2. To eliminate arbitrary gender designations.

Business leaders must recognize the importance of elevating women to an equal status at work. To reduce gender bias in the workplace, consider the following suggestions.

3. Expand Child Care and Paid Family Leave

Adding more support for parents and caregivers can help alleviate the burden for women in the workplace. Policies that companies can adopt to bridge the gap for women in business include offering and expanding access to Paid sick days, Paid family leave, Comprehensive paid medical leave and Child care services. Policies like these can minimize job loss and ensure better economic security for all workers, especially women, who continue to bear the burden of caregiving in our society.

4. Provide Ongoing Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Training

Deep-seated biases against women in business cannot be unlearned overnight. Companies should invest in ongoing employee education to see lasting culture change. A single training is typically insufficient — consistent, reinforced messages that women face gender bias in the workplace is a good place to start.

5. Equal Pay Day

Equal Pay Day represents how far in the year women must work in order to make the same amount of money men did in the previous year.

6. Create fair compensation and promotion procedures.

Create an employee compensation program that is fair, equitable and transparent. Offer your employees equal pay for equal work, regardless of their gender. This is one of the most obvious and easy ways you can work towards gender equality in your workplace. Offering competitive and fair pay is also a great way to attract and retain top talent.



7. Offer flexible and supportive employee benefits.

The McKinsey study found that employee burnout is one of the largest stressors currently impacting women in the workplace. Since the pandemic, women are disproportionately affected by burnout, stress and exhaustion compared to their male counterparts. So, a way could be to offer flexible and supportive employee benefits.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

For all men and women who have diversified their career aspirations, consumer demand is also a driving force of change. There are also advantages in bringing women to upfront as most women are intuitive, creative, trusting, so they quickly understand that working with female investigators can have better success. The past decade has also seen an increase in the share of middle-aged and older women who views that being successful in a high-paying career or profession is one of the most important things in their lives. To be successful in career people weigh the importance of key aspects of life. For men and women of all ages, being a good parent and having a successful marriage continue to rank significantly higher on their list of priorities than being successful in a high-paying job or career. Thus, the increased importance of women is now placing on their careers at the expense of the importance they place on marriage and family.

6. CONCLUSION:

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, it is also one of the gravest human rights challenges that our society faces today. With women's empowerment, gender equality contributes to achieving peaceful and resilient communities, sustainable development, and economic growth. Despite several strides toward closing the gender inequality gap and addressing discrimination in the past few decades, India still ranks among the lowest countries in the gender equality index. Further, attitudinal disparities, stereotyping, and blindly adhering to social norms have kept gender inequality thriving. The gender discrimination in recruitment is pervasive and may arise for different reasons, where employers' consciously or unconsciously prefer male candidates. . The past decade has also seen an increase in the share of middle-aged and older women who views that being successful in a high-paying career or profession is one of the most important things in their lives. To be successful in career people weigh the importance of key aspects of life.

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