



Gender Politics at Workplaces: An In-Depth Exploration of Challenges, Strategies and Societal Implications

1*Syed Shuja Askari 2* Dr. Shobhana Singh1 3* Sanjeev Kumar Pandey

1, 2, 3 Assistant Professor

1, 2, 3* School of Management Sciences, Lucknow

Abstract:

This research study attempts a thorough investigation of the complex and diverse field of gender politics in modern workplaces. Through the integration of several academic disciplines, sociological viewpoints, and real-world case studies, this study endeavors to provide a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles that individuals face in the workplace due to their gender identity. The study discusses alternative ways to promote inclusivity and equality in the workplace, looks at the existing complexity, and digs into the historical development of gender dynamics. The study also explores how gender intersects with other social categories, examines how legal frameworks affect gender politics, and considers the wider societal ramifications of these dynamics at work. By means of this thorough investigation, the study aims to offer significant contributions to the current discourse on gender politics, laying the groundwork for well-informed conversations, policy deliberations, and endeavors focused on fostering more just and inclusive work environments.

1- Introduction

Workplaces serve as crucibles where societal norms, power dynamics, and personal identities collide to define the professional landscape in the complex tapestry of modern society (Miller, University, Erickson, & Yust, 2001). Gender politics is one of the most interesting and prevalent aspects of this field. Gender politics in the workplace is an important topic that goes beyond theoretical discourse to examine individual experiences and its wider consequences for organizational dynamics (Webster, Adams, Maranto, & Beehr, 2018). It is not just a study for academics. This study sets out on a challenging mission by delving deeply into the tactics, obstacles, and societal ramifications associated with gender politics in the workplace. The significance of dissecting gender politics within professional environments cannot be overstated. It is a pivotal lens through which we can scrutinize the complexities of power structures, cultural norms, and systemic biases that shape the professional trajectories of individuals based on their gender identities. By immersing ourselves in this exploration, we aim to unravel the multifaceted challenges faced by diverse genders, shed light on discriminatory practices that persist despite societal progress, and chart a course toward fostering environments that celebrate inclusivity and equity. The understanding that gender politics is not a static concept but rather the result of a dynamic interaction between past legacies, presents realities, and desired futures is at the core of this investigation. We must travel through time to comprehend its complexity, analyzing the historical underpinnings that have created the framework for current issues. At the same time, we have to address the urgent problems that people in today's workplace face, such as the pernicious gender pay gap and the subtle but significant influence of stereotypes on career Paths. We will examine the complex web of gendered hierarchies and power dynamics that permeate organizational systems as we work through this investigation. These dynamics frequently determine who gets promoted

inside the company, whose opinions are heard louder during decision-making, and whose experiences are ignored. Understanding the complex dynamics of power in the workplace is essential to comprehending how gender politics solidifies and endures. Without recognizing the multiple identities that people embody, our investigation would fall short. We have to acknowledge the intersections between gender and other social categories such as race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Because of this intersectionality, the story becomes more complex and presents particular difficulties for those who manage several facets of their identities. Because human experiences are fluid and interconnected, our path necessitates a sophisticated understanding that goes beyond a binary notion of gender. The legal environment significantly influences how gender politics are shaped in the workplace. While laws and regulations play a vital role in establishing an equitable framework, they also require constant review to spot flaws and areas for development. The effectiveness of current legal frameworks will be evaluated, and potential ways to improve protections against discrimination based on gender will be investigated. We will focus on diversity and inclusion programs run by progressive organizations in our search for answers. Through the examination of effective tactics, such as diversity training, flexible work schedules, and mentorship programs, our goal is to identify best practices that may be applied to a variety of professional settings. Case studies from the real world will offer concrete illustrations of businesses that have successfully managed the difficulties posed by gender politics. Gender politics has far-reaching effects outside of conference rooms and workstations. They have an impact on cultural norms, either supporting or contradicting widely held beliefs about gender roles. This study recognizes gender politics' influence in creating and upholding social norms and expectations while also considering the larger societal ramifications of gender politics (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015a). In summary, this study is an ambitious attempt to integrate the historical elements, contemporary issues, and future goals that make up the fabric of gender politics in the workplace. By delving further into this thorough investigation, we hope to make a meaningful contribution to the continuing story of societal advancement as well as scholarly discourse, promoting diverse, inclusive, and egalitarian workplaces.

2- Historical Foundations of Gender Dynamics at Work

Gender dynamics at work have historical roots, but they also reflect a complex tapestry woven with the strands of changing cultural norms, economic shifts, and societal progress. It's critical to investigate the historical influences that have established gender-based roles, expectations, and opportunities in order to comprehend the complexities of gender politics in modern workplaces.

Pre-Industrial Era: Agricultural Societies and Gender Roles Gender roles in pre-industrial societies were often determined by the needs of agricultural activities, especially in agrarian economies. Traditionally, women were in charge of taking care of the home and providing care for others, while males were assigned to physically taxing jobs like harvesting and plowing. The foundation for ensuing gender expectations within the developing workplace structures was established by these firmly embedded positions.

Industrial Revolution: Emergence of Gendered Occupations The 18th and 19th centuries saw the start of the Industrial Revolution, which significantly altered the dynamics of labor. As factories and businesses flourished, gendered roles in the workplace started to solidify. Men worked in mines, factories, and other industrial settings, taking on physically demanding activities, while women were frequently restricted to jobs that were seen as continuations of household duties, such as assembly line or textile labor (Blackburn & Jarman, 2006).

World Wars: Temporary Shifts and Persistent Norms Gender dynamics at work witnessed a brief but significant shift throughout the turbulent World Wars. Women began to fill roles that had previously been filled by men when they joined the military. The concept that women's employment was a wartime necessity rather than a social norm was furthered by the return of society to more conservative norms after the War ("w3203," n.d.).

Post-World War II: Feminist Movements and Changing Perceptions Feminist movements began to form in the second half of the 20th century, challenging deeply rooted gender conventions. The goal of the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s was to end discriminatory practices and promote workplace equality. The legal basis for workplace equality was established by laws like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the

United States and comparable policies in other countries. These laws prohibited discrimination based on gender ("valk2020," n.d.). Late 20th Century to Present: Increasing Workforce Diversity and Ongoing Challenges The latter part of the 20th century and the early 21st century witnessed a gradual diversification of the workforce. Women, alongside other marginalized genders, began entering professions that were previously inaccessible. However, the persistence of the gender pay gap, occupational segregation, and discriminatory promotion practices underscore that historical gender dynamics continue to influence contemporary workplaces. Technology and Remote Work: Shaping New Narratives Both opportunities and challenges have arisen with the introduction of technology, particularly with regard to the increase of remote employment enabled by digital advancements. While working remotely may allow for more flexibility and a better work-life balance, it also brings up concerns about how gender inequality may persist in virtual environments and the necessity of inclusive laws that take a variety of requirements into account (Battisti, Alfiero, & Leonidou, 2022).

3- Current Challenges in Gender Politics

Today's workplace gender politics are shaped by a complex interplay of organizational, sociocultural, and economic forces. Many obstacles continue to exist, influencing people's experiences according to their gender identity, even in spite of significant advancements in the identification and resolution of gender-based issues. Some of the current issues of gender politics in the workplace are described in the section that follows:

- Gender Pay Gap:** Women are still generally paid less for doing the same work as men, which is a persistent problem in the workplace. Numerous factors, such as occupational segregation, discriminatory wage practices, and the devaluation of industries traditionally dominated by women, contribute to this imbalance (Toczek, Bosma, & Peter, 2021).
- Occupational Segregation:** The concentration of people of a given gender in particular professions or employment functions, or occupational segregation, remains a major problem. There are still a lot of men and women working in some businesses and sectors, which reinforces gender stereotypes and makes it harder for people to enter non-traditional occupations (Glass, n.d.; Rammohan, Goli, & Reddy, n.d.).
- Biased Promotion Practices:** Gender-based discrimination and unconscious bias fuel biased promotion practices that impede people's ability to advance in society. The "glass ceiling," an imperceptible barrier that keeps women and other oppressed genders from rising to the top leadership positions, is one example of this (Saygin et al., 2023; Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015b).
- Stereotypes and Gendered Expectations:** In the workplace, prejudices and strongly embedded gendered norms still affect hiring decisions, performance reviews, and professional relationships. These misconceptions put obstacles in the way of people who don't fit the mold of traditional gender roles and help to maintain such roles (Stewart, Wright, Smith, Roberts, & Russell, 2021).
- Microaggressions and Hostile Work Environments:** People who work in hostile situations due to their gender experience this because of microaggressions, which are small and frequently unintended acts of bias. Microaggressions can take many different forms, such as remarks, jokes, or actions that denigrate or marginalize particular genders, and they can exacerbate a hostile work environment (Velazquez, Gilligan, Kiel, Graff, & Duma, 2022).
- Work-Life Balance Challenges:** Finding a work-life balance can be difficult when it comes to expectations of traditional gender roles. Women in particular can experience pressure from society to take on caregiving duties, which could hinder their ability to progress in their careers. On the other hand, when males prioritize their family responsibilities or look for flexible employment arrangements, they could run across stigmas or other obstacles (Deshmukh, 2020; Lakshmi & Prasanth, 2018).
- Lack of Representation in Leadership:** It is a recurring issue that women and other oppressed genders are underrepresented in leadership positions. In addition to impeding the variety of viewpoints required for efficient decision-making, this lack of representation acts as a symbolic barrier for those aiming for positions of leadership (*Gender inequality in the workplace: The lack of women in upper management positions*, n.d.).
- Intersectionality and Multiple Identities:** People's struggles are exacerbated by intersectionality, which is the overlap of many social identities like race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Individuals who have overlapping identities frequently experience distinct and complex types of

discrimination, necessitating a more sophisticated comprehension of the interactions between many axes of identity. Digital Gender Divide: Concerns about the gender gap in digital employment are growing as jobs move more and more into digital environments. The need to address gender inequities in the digital sphere is highlighted by issues like online harassment, gender bias in algorithms, and the unequal distribution of opportunities in tech-related areas (Alozie & Akpan-Obong, 2017; *Gendering the digital divide in India*, n.d.). Resistance to Change: One of the biggest challenges in organizational culture is resistance to change. The implementation of inclusive policies and diversity programs may encounter resistance from deeply ingrained conventions and attitudes, so hindering the advancement of gender equality.

4- Power Dynamics and Gendered Hierarchies

Fundamental elements of workplaces that have a major impact on professional experiences and opportunities based on gender are power dynamics and gendered hierarchies. Deciphering the intricacies of gender politics inside organizational structures requires a grasp of these processes. The impact of gendered hierarchies and power relations on people in the workplace is further discussed in the part that follows:

Formal Power Structures: Gendered hierarchies are frequently a result of formal power arrangements seen in organizations, such as managerial responsibilities and hierarchical levels. Gender-based authority has been perceived historically due to the preponderance of men in leadership roles. An individual's gender-based power concentration has the potential to sustain disparities in the distribution of resources and decision-making processes. **Informal Power Networks:** Gender dynamics are significantly shaped by informal power networks, which go beyond official structures. People who don't conform to established gender stereotypes may unintentionally be excluded from these networks, which are frequently built on social connections, mentorship, and personal interactions. It's possible that men will fit into these networks more easily, which will increase their influence inside the company ("elliott2004," n.d.).

Glass Ceiling and Sticky Floors: The term "glass ceiling" refers to an imperceptible barrier that prevents women and other oppressed genders from moving up the professional ladder. On the other hand, "sticky floors" refer to the propensity for people to stay in lower-level roles with little opportunity for advancement. These analogies highlight the ways in which gendered hierarchies preserve the status quo by limiting access to high leadership positions (Hejase & Dah, 2014).

Tokenism and Representation: A sign of gendered hierarchy is tokenism, the practice of including a few members of underrepresented groups to provide the impression of variety. In leadership positions, women and other underrepresented genders could experience tokenization and increased pressure to represent their entire gender. This relationship has the potential to erode their authority and support the idea that specific genders in leadership roles are the exception rather than the rule (Zimmer, 1988).

Power Differentials in Decision-Making: Organizational decision-making processes are impacted by power imbalances. Men may occupy decision-making positions at a disproportionate rate in gendered hierarchies, which can shape behaviors and policies that unintentionally support discrimination based on gender. Policies that fail to take into account the particular demands and difficulties faced by people who identify as different genders may be the consequence of this lack of varied viewpoints.

Sexual Harassment and Power Abuse: Sexual harassment and power abuse in the workplace can be caused by unequal power dynamics. People in positions of authority may abuse their influence, making the atmosphere unfriendly for those who hold lower positions. This misuse of authority makes it more difficult to report and remedy events of this kind, therefore sustaining gender inequality.

Perceptions of Competence and Leadership: Perceptions of leadership and competence are influenced by gendered hierarchies. Research has indicated that assessments of leadership qualities may be biased against women and people of marginalized genders due to preconceptions that present them as less capable or assertive. These prejudices have an effect on leadership opportunities and career advancement (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994).

Workplace Culture and Norms: Gendered hierarchies in organizations are largely influenced by organizational culture. A culture that ignores or condones discrimination based on gender could unintentionally strengthen existing power disparities. On the other hand, gendered hierarchies can be challenged and an environment that is more accepting of people of all gender identities can be created by a culture that actively values diversity, equity, and inclusion (Tiliuță, n.d.).

Impact on Career Advancement: Opportunities for career growth are impacted by gender hierarchies. People who conform to conventional gender standards might have an easier time advancing in their careers, while those who don't might encounter more scrutiny and obstacles.

Challenges in Negotiation and Advocacy: Gendered hierarchies can impair the bargaining and advocacy capacities of individuals. Women, for instance, may find obstacles in bargaining for wage raises or promotions due to prejudices that see assertiveness in negotiation as incongruent with established gender norms.

5- Inclusivity and Diversity Initiatives

Initiatives promoting diversity and inclusivity are crucial tactics for developing work settings where people of all genders, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and other social identities can flourish. These environments are intended to recognize and value individual differences. By utilizing the strength of varied viewpoints and experiences, these efforts not only support corporate performance but also uphold ethical standards. The ensuing segment expounds on diverse and inclusive activities that establishments can implement to foster a fairer and more hospitable work environment:

Mentorship Programs: Through mentoring programs, members of underrepresented groups are paired with seasoned professionals who can offer direction, encouragement, and career advice. These programs assist in closing the opportunity gap by providing sponsorship and mentoring to people who might encounter obstacles in their pursuit of a better job (Fernuniversität, Hagen, & Witte, n.d.).

Diversity Training and Workshops: Extensive diversity education programs and workshops educate staff members about the value of inclusivity and raise awareness of the subject. The initiatives center on deconstructing preconceptions, tackling implicit biases, and cultivating an environment of mutual respect and comprehension among team members (Dunlap, n.d.).

Affinity Groups and Employee Resource Networks: Employee resource networks, or affinity groups, give workers who have similar traits or histories a forum to interact, exchange stories, and support inclusive policies. These associations foster a feeling of camaraderie and offer insightful feedback to the organization's leadership (Welbourne, Research, & Schlachter, 2015).

Inclusive Recruitment and Hiring Practices: By aggressively pursuing applicants from a variety of backgrounds, organizations can put inclusive hiring practices into practice. This entails using diverse recruitment channels, making sure hiring panels are varied, and reviewing and updating job descriptions to eliminate biased language (Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2018).

Flexible Work Arrangements: Providing flexible work arrangements promotes an inclusive workplace by meeting a range of demands and allowing for remote work or flexible scheduling. People who are responsible for providing care or who have different preferences when it comes to their work style may find this especially helpful.

Transparent Promotion Processes: Ensuring that career development is determined by merit instead than prejudicial opinions requires the establishment of clear promotion procedures. A fair and equitable promotion system includes explicit promotion criteria, frequent performance reviews, and procedures for handling potential prejudice.

Inclusive Leadership Development Programs: Within a company, a varied pool of talent can be identified and developed through leadership development programs that place a high priority on inclusion. Through

aggressively elevating members of underrepresented groups into leadership positions, these programs seek to develop leadership abilities.

Cultural Competency Training: This improves workers' capacity to collaborate well in a variety of multicultural teams. This entails being aware of subtle cultural differences, identifying various communication nuances, and cultivating an atmosphere that values a range of viewpoints.

Intersectionality Awareness: Understanding how different facets of identity interact and impact people's lives is necessary to identify and resolve intersectionality. Initiatives aimed at promoting inclusivity should consider the particular difficulties encountered by people whose identities overlap and seek to establish a setting that recognizes and values their intricacies.

Regular Diversity Audits and Metrics: Organizations can evaluate the success of their inclusion programs through the use of metrics and regular diversity audits. Demographic data tracking, survey administration, and employee feedback analysis offer insightful information for ongoing development.

Supplier Diversity Programs: Organizations might introduce supplier diversity programs to broaden their diversity objectives beyond internal practices. This entails proactively pursuing collaborations with companies owned by members of marginalized communities, thereby fostering a more diverse supply chain.

Inclusive Language and Communication Guidelines: Respectful cultures can be fostered by establishing standards for inclusive language to be used in internal and external communications. This entails utilizing inclusive pronouns, staying away from gendered terminology, and making sure that marketing materials show a range of demographics.

6.1- Societal Implications and Future Outlook

Understanding how workplace dynamics affect larger social norms and expectations requires examining the wider ramifications of gender politics in the workplace. Projecting a future vision also enables reflection on possible changes in practices, legislation, and attitudes that could influence the direction of gender inclusion. The ensuing segment delves into the socioeconomic ramifications of gender politics in professional settings and examines the forthcoming terrain:

Reinforcement of Gender Norms: Workplace dynamics have the power to uphold or undermine gender norms in society. Broader cultural expectations about the responsibilities and capacities of men and women are reinforced when traditional gender norms are upheld within businesses. Conversely, companies that aggressively question these standards help to change public perceptions of gender equality. **Impact on Social Attitudes:** As people take their job experiences into their wider communities, gender politics at work can have an impact on societal perceptions of gender roles. Gender norms and expectations are shifting in society as a result of positive employment experiences that are marked by inclusivity and equal chances.

Role Modeling and Cultural Shifts: One of the most effective forms of role modeling that businesses may employ is the presence of diverse leadership. By demonstrating that other viewpoints are respected, it dispels preconceptions and promotes societal changes when people of underrepresented genders occupy leadership roles. Consequently, this leads to broader cultural changes in perceptions of leadership abilities.

Economic Empowerment: Economic empowerment is significantly impacted by gender-inclusive workplaces. Equal access to professional possibilities for people of all genders helps women and other marginalized genders become financially independent. In turn, this economic empowerment has the potential to upend established power structures in communities and families.

Impact on Educational Choices: Workplace settings have an impact on students' decision-making regarding their education and careers. People may be encouraged to choose jobs that have traditionally been underrepresented by their gender if they work in an environment that actively encourages inclusion.

This may have a ripple effect on educational decisions, resulting in a workforce that is more balanced and diversified across a range of occupations.

Legitimization of Legal Frameworks: Workplace policies pertaining to gender equality have the potential to support or undermine current legal frameworks. Laws intended to shield people from discrimination based on gender are more legitimate and effective when organizations actively adopt inclusive policies.

Public Perception of Companies: The public frequently views companies that value inclusivity positively. A favorable public image can improve a brand's reputation and draw in a wide range of clients and talent. On the other hand, businesses that disregard gender inclusion run the danger of negative publicity and reputational issues.

Intersectionality Awareness in Society: Through cultivation in inclusive workplaces, an understanding of intersectionality can seep into society's consciousness. People who are exposed to intersectional viewpoints in the workplace may bring this understanding back to their communities, where it can inform more complex discussions about privilege, discrimination, and the interdependence of social identities.

Policy Advocacy and Societal Change: Experiences at work can influence people to become activists for social change. Workers who encounter or witness gender-based discrimination may end up advocating for cultural and policy changes that advance gender equality more broadly.

6.2- Future Outlook:

The direction of gender politics in the workplace has a great deal of promise for improvement as we move forward. Looking ahead to a more diverse future entails:

- Tech-Driven Inclusivity:** Employing technology to promote inclusivity efforts, such as remote work options and AI-driven, fair hiring procedures, can help create more inclusive work environments.

International Collaboration: As the world grows more interconnected, there are more chances for cross-cultural cooperation that can impact inclusive workplace policies and push back against conventional gender conventions globally.

Policy Innovation: Novel policies that address new issues and offer more thorough safeguards against gender-based discrimination may be implemented in the future. These policies would go beyond established frameworks.

Cultural Shifts: As society expectations change, ongoing cultural adjustments brought about by generational shifts and heightened awareness may make companies more flexible, varied, and inclusive.

Education for Inclusivity: By encouraging knowledge, empathy, and abilities for navigating different professional situations, future educational initiatives can significantly contribute to educating people for inclusive workplaces.

Increased Advocacy and Accountability: In the future, there will probably be a greater push for gender inclusiveness from both inside and outside of businesses. This could result in companies being held more accountable for aggressively addressing and resolving gender-based inequities.

Data-Driven Decision-Making: To measure and improve diversity and inclusion activities, organizations are probably going to rely more and more on data analytics, which will result in more evidence-based decision making procedures. **Continued Intersectionality Focus:** Given the significance of intersectionality, it is probable that programs in the future will focus more on addressing the particular difficulties encountered by people who have overlapping social identities.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the historical underpinnings of gender dynamics at work, which are deeply entwined with the history of agrarian civilizations, the Industrial Revolution, and the feminist movements that followed, have a

lasting impact on the difficulties that face society today. Deeply rooted historical traditions continue to have an impact on issues including the gender pay gap, occupational segregation, and discriminatory promotion practices. As a result of these difficulties, diversity and inclusiveness programs have become essential instruments, providing a revolutionary means of destroying deeply ingrained prejudices and promoting more equal work environments. Examining the societal ramifications highlights how workplace dynamics and larger social norms interact dynamically, highlighting the critical impact that positive workplace experiences can play in transforming societal perceptions of gender roles. Looking ahead, the path to a more diverse workplace entails utilizing technology developments, encouraging international cooperation, leading the way in policy innovation, welcoming cultural transformations, and stepping up advocacy initiatives. Organizations and individuals must work together to negotiate this route so that gender equality can become a lived reality rather than simply an ideal, helping to build a more just and equitable society.

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