



A THEORETICAL STUDY ON GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE WORKFORCE

Dr.S.SANTHANALAKSHMI, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS,

Ms. V. PRIYANKA, RESEARCH SCHOLAR,

C.B.M COLLEGE, KOVAIPUDUR, COIMBATORE-641 042.

Abstract

Women have fought for 90 years to be treated equally to men in all facets of life including the workplace. Although women have made significant strides in school and the workplace, they still lack equal pay and advancement opportunities. Women make less money than males does, and this is well known and frequently debated. Is inequality really as skewed as people believe it to be, and why is this happening? If there is a "glass ceiling," why is it there, and what can women do to overcome it so they may succeed as top-level executives and earn salaries that are commensurate with them. Therefore, this study will address these issues.

Keywords: Women, Equality, Gender Equality, Gender Equity.

Introduction

Beginning in the 1800s, women started to demand equality. Following the Civil War, African-American men gained the right to vote with the ratification of the 15th amendment in 1865. Before women could have that same right, it would be another 55 years. The first conference for women's rights was established in 1848, marking the beginning of the women's movement known as feminism. Due to the small number of universities that women were permitted to attend at this time in American history, they had minimal privileges and access to education. They were also seen as being the father's or husband's property. This implied that anything they had was merely an illusion of ownership. Over the last 93 years women have made great advances toward equality but total equality in pay, executive positions and high earning positions still elude them.

Despite significant progress in promoting gender equality, gender inequality remains a pervasive issue in the workforce. This theoretical study seeks to investigate and understand the various dimensions of gender inequality in professional settings, identifying the underlying factors that contribute to this disparity. Women in the workforce continue to face specific challenges and disparities, including barriers to career advancement, wage gaps, and work-life balance issues. It's important to note that these challenges may vary depending on factors such as geography, industry, and cultural context

Review of Literature

Martel *et.al* (2007), Women are also likely to receive fewer opportunities at work, compared with men, resulting in their under-representation at higher levels of management and leadership within organizations.

King *et.al* (2012), Managers give women fewer challenging roles and fewer training opportunities, compared with men.

De Pater *et.al* (2010), Men are more likely to be given key leadership assignments in male-dominated fields and in female-dominated fields.

Lagerlof (2003), models gender inequality as a social norm: on average, men have higher human capital than women. Confronted with this fact, parents play a coordination game in which it is optimal for them to reproduce the inequality in the next generation. The reason is that parents expect the future husbands of their daughters to be, on average, relatively more educated than the future wives of their sons.

Causes of Less Earning compared to Men

There are numerous reasons why women earn lower than men. One is attributed to the education and work terrain women seek. Women frequently look for jobs that have normal hours, good working conditions, and safety. Men without a council education enter occupations similar as firefighting, truck driving, and construction which are largely manly occupations but also largely dangerous. Women without a council education enter womanish occupations similar as being a clerk, cashier, and child caretaker.

The gender wage gap, the difference in earnings between men and women, has been a longstanding issue that has been studied and discussed extensively. There are various reasons why women may earn less than men, and it's essential to note that the wage gap can vary depending on the country, industry, and other factors. Here are some possible reasons for the gender wage gap:

Occupational segregation: Women and men often work in different industries and occupations, and some fields dominated by men tend to offer higher wages. Jobs in sectors like technology, engineering, and finance have historically been male-dominated and may offer higher salaries compared to fields that attract more women, such as education or social work.

Unequal representation in leadership roles: Women are underrepresented in top management and executive positions, which often come with higher salaries and greater opportunities for advancement. Glass ceilings and gender bias in promotion and hiring practices can limit women's access to these higher-paying leadership roles.

Motherhood penalty: Women often face wage penalties and career interruptions due to motherhood. Maternity leave, taking time off to care for children, and reduced work hours to balance family responsibilities can negatively impact women's earnings and career progression.

Discrimination and bias: Unconscious or explicit bias against women in the workplace can influence hiring, salary negotiation, and promotion decisions, leading to lower pay for equally qualified female employees.

Salary negotiation differences: Research has shown that women are often less likely to negotiate their salaries compared to men. This can result in initial wage offers and subsequent pay raises that are lower than their male counterparts.

Differences in work experience and tenure: Women may have breaks in their career for various reasons, such as caregiving responsibilities or family obligations, which can impact their work experience and overall tenure in a position, potentially affecting their earnings.

Part-time work and flexibility: Women are more likely than men to work part-time or seek flexible work arrangements to balance work and family life. Part-time positions generally offer lower salaries and limited opportunities for career growth compared to full-time roles.

Lack of access to higher education and training: Limited access to education and training opportunities can hinder women's career advancement and potential for higher-paying jobs.

It is important to address these issues through policy changes, workplace initiatives, and cultural shifts to create a more equitable and fair working environment for everyone, regardless of gender. Measures such as pay transparency, family-friendly policies, promoting women's leadership and representation, and combating discrimination can help narrow the gender wage gap.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by women in the workforce and help inform the development of policies and practices that promote gender equality and create a more inclusive work environment. Addressing gender inequality requires a concerted effort from organizations, policymakers, and society at large to dismantle barriers and foster a more equitable workplace for everyone.

Recommendations to overcome Gender inequality

Overcoming gender inequality requires a collective effort from individuals, organizations, policymakers, and society as a whole. Here are some recommendations to promote gender equality in the workforce:

- ❖ Providing Equal pay for equal work
- ❖ develop mentorship and sponsorship programs to support women's career development and increase their representation in leadership positions.
- ❖ Encourage women to seek leadership roles and provide them with the necessary training and opportunities to excel.
- ❖ Encourage diverse teams and ensure that employees from all backgrounds have an equal voice and opportunities for growth

- ❖ Raise awareness about gender equality issues through workshops, seminars, and educational campaigns. Promote gender equality in schools, colleges, and workplaces to challenge stereotypes and biases.
- ❖ Engage men as allies in the fight for gender equality. Men can play a crucial role in challenging gender norms and advocating for equal opportunities for women

By implementing these recommendations, we can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive workforce where individuals of all genders have equal opportunities to thrive and succeed. It's essential for everyone to actively participate in the journey towards gender equality, fostering a more just and fair society for future generations.

Central government policies to overcome the Gender Inequality in India

Central government has initiated various policies to overcome the Gender Equity in India. The Following Policies has introduced to abolish the gender inequality in India.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save the Daughter, Educate the Daughter): This initiative was launched to address the declining child sex ratio and to promote the education of girls. It focused on raising awareness about the importance of gender equality and investing in the education and well-being of girls.

Maternity Benefit Act: The Maternity Benefit Act of 1961 was amended in 2017 to enhance maternity leave for working women from 12 weeks to 26 weeks. This policy aimed to provide more support to women during pregnancy and encourage their participation in the workforce.

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act: This act was enacted in 2013 to create a safe and harassment-free work environment for women. It mandates the establishment of Internal Complaints Committees (ICC) in workplaces to address complaints of sexual harassment.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY): Launched in 2016, PMUY aimed to provide free LPG connections to women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. This policy was designed to reduce the health hazards associated with traditional cooking fuels and to empower women by easing their daily chores.

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana: This scheme, introduced in 2015, encourages parents to save for the future education and marriage expenses of their girl child. It provides a higher interest rate and tax benefits to promote long-term savings for the welfare of the girl child.

One-Stop Centres (OSC): One-Stop Centres were set up across the country to provide assistance to women who are victims of violence. These centers offer medical, legal, psychological, and other support services in a single location to aid women in distress.

Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK): Launched as a part of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme, MSK aims to empower rural women through community participation. It provides skill development, health awareness, and other capacity-building programs for women.

National Policy for Women: The Indian government formulated the National Policy for Women in 2016 to address the challenges faced by women and to ensure their equal participation and opportunities in all spheres of life.

These are just some of the central government policies aimed at promoting gender equity in India. It's worth noting that the effectiveness of these policies may vary, and continuous efforts are required to address gender disparities and foster an inclusive and equal society.

Conclusion

This theoretical study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of gender inequality in the workforce, the factors that perpetuate it, and its broader implications for society and the economy. By shedding light on these issues and proposing effective strategies, the research seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts towards a more equitable and inclusive work environment. Overall, this provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by women in the workforce and help inform the development of policies and practices that promote gender equality and create a more inclusive work environment. Even though, Government initiated various policies, It is not so effectively implemented in few work places. These loopholes should be rectified for the Gender Equality. Addressing gender inequality requires a concerted effort from organizations, policymakers, and society at large to dismantle barriers and foster a more equitable workplace for everyone.

References

1. Martell, R. F., Lane, D. M., and Emrich, C. (2007), Male-female differences: a computer simulation published by Psychol, 51, 157–158.
[Doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.51.2.157](https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.51.2.157)
2. King, E. B., Botsford, W., Hebl, M. R., Kazama, S., Dawson, J. F., and Perkins, A. (2012), “Benevolent sexism at work: gender differences in the distribution of challenging developmental experiences”, published by journal of management, 38, 1835–1866.
[doi: 10.1177/0149206310365902](https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310365902)
3. De Pater, I. E., Van Vianen, A. E. M., and Bechtoldt, M. N (2010), “Gender differences in job challenge: a matter of task allocation” published by Gender Work Organization. 17, 433–453.
[doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2009.00477.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2009.00477.x)
4. Lagerlof, N.P. (2003), “Gender equality and long-run growth” Published by Journal of Economic Growth, 8, 403–426.
5. Kimura, M., & Yasui, D. (2010), “The Galor-Weil gender-gap model revisited: from home to market”, published by Journal of Economic Growth, 15, 323–351.

6. Heath, R., & Tan, X. (2020), “Intrahousehold bargaining, female autonomy, and labor supply: theory and evidence from India”, published by Journal of the European Economic Association, 18(4), 1928–1968.

