



FROM STEREO TYPES TO SUCCESS: ADDRESSING SECOND-GENERATION GENDER BIAS IN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

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ABSTRACT: Gender bias, a pervasive and deeply ingrained phenomenon, has persisted across societies and throughout history, shaping the experiences, opportunities, and expectations of individuals based on their gender. While the status and economy of various countries around the world have started to undergo development and change, women as major part of such transitions, began their journey in fighting for a place and position, most notably in the workplace. Explicit practices and structures prohibitive of advancing women's opportunities within the spaces of economic endeavours have somehow been addressed through various legislations and company-based rules and policies, which tries to ensure that women are not discriminated in the workplace. Despite such strides, there remain lingering issues that are implicitly connected to and are reflective of gender bias, some of which are unique to the context of the workplace. Thus, it may be fair to conclude that at present, there exist two types of gender bias in the workplace: the first-generation gender bias (hereinafter referred to as 1GGB) and the second-generation gender bias (hereinafter referred to as 2GGB; (Grover, 2015).

First generation gender bias pertains to the manifest form of discrimination against women in the society and workplace that are "intentional" in nature (Rifkin, 2015). While, 2GGB lacks neither the intention to exclude nor to produce direct harm to women in society (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013a). Thus, 2GGB may have been a result of genderstereotypes and societal expectations of both men and women (Rifkin, 2015). This study will refer to a phenomenon wherein employed women are treated unfairly compared to men in ways that are subtle and hard to detect. Such invisibility of forms and manifestations of 2GGB makes it doubly difficult to track down unless clear and categorical measures are used as indicators. This research paper endeavours to probe into the multifaceted layers of 2GGB experienced by women managers, how women are affected by the different forms of 2GGB in their respective workplace, recommend actions for women to address second-generation gender bias.

Keywords: Second generation gender bias, gender bias, gender inequality, invisible barriers, glass ceiling, 360-degrees feedback.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the complex web of gender dynamics, second-generation gender bias emerges as a subtle and often underestimated force, exerting its influence within the intricate complexities of societal structures. While progress has been made in recognizing and tackling obvious gender inequalities, the insidious nature of second-generation gender bias continues to hinder the advancement towards true gender equality. This research paper embarks on a comprehensive exploration of second-generation gender bias, aiming to uncover its hidden manifestations, comprehend its impact on individuals and society, and propose strategies to dismantle these unseen barriers.

In contrast to its predecessor, first-generation gender bias, which often manifested through blatant discrimination and explicit practices, second-generation gender bias, operates in a more covert manner. It thrives within the norms, values, and structures of institutions, making it difficult to identify and address. This bias permeates various aspects of life, including education, employment, leadership, and societal expectations, contributing to the persistence of gender disparities in ways that are not immediately apparent.

Evidence of Second-Generation Gender Bias

In 2008, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) discovered that female full-time workers earned 17% less than their male counterparts. They also found that discriminatory practices in the labor market accounted for 30% of the gender wage gap across OECD countries. Similarly, the European Commission reported that women's hourly earnings were on average 17.5% lower in the 27 EU Member States in 2008. In the United States, the female-to-male earnings ratio was 0.77 in 2009, according to the Los Angeles Times. A Gallup poll revealed that 15% of American women believed they were overlooked for promotions or other opportunities at work due to their gender, while 13% felt they were denied a raise for the same reason. The gender pay gap is a global phenomenon, with higher disparities observed in countries like Korea (37.5%), Russia (32.1%), Estonia (27.9%), Japan (27.4%), and India (24.81%). On the other hand, countries like Poland (6.2%), Spain (6.1%), New Zealand (4.2%), and Slovenia (3.5%) have lower gender pay gaps.

Catalyst's global research indicates significant gender pay gaps in the tech sector and other industries. In India, women and men initially start with equal pay and responsibilities, with aspirations to reach the highest levels, including CEO positions. However, over time, a gender gap emerges, with women falling behind men by approximately Rs 3.8 lakhs or \$6,000 after about 12 years into their careers.

The Monster Salary Index India IT Sector Report 2014 reveals that only 30% of the IT sector workforce in India is comprised of women, who also face a substantial gender pay gap of 29%. Male IT workers earn Rs 359.25 per hour, while female IT workers receive Rs 254.04 per hour. This disparity may stem from the fact that men are more frequently promoted to supervisory positions. Only 36% of female employees hold such positions.

Forms of Second-Generation Gender Bias

Second-generation gender bias is frequently unintentional and may not stem from malicious intent, yet it continues to exert a substantial influence in perpetuating gender inequalities across different spheres, including the workplace, education, and social interactions. There are various manifestations of second-generation gender bias.

➤ **Stereotypes and Assumptions**

Assumptions about gender roles and abilities can lead to stereotyping, where certain traits or roles are associated with a particular gender. This can limit opportunities and reinforce traditional norms.

➤ **Invisibility and Marginalization:**

Women's contributions and achievements may be overlooked or undervalued, leading to their invisibility in various fields. This can result in fewer opportunities for career advancement and recognition.

➤ **Unequal Workload:**

Women may face disproportionate expectations and responsibilities related to caregiving and domestic work, leading to challenges in balancing work and family life. This can hinder career progression.

➤ **Lack of Representation**

Underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, decision-making roles, and certain industries can contribute to a cycle of inequality, as it may perpetuate stereotypes about gendered capabilities and limit role models for aspiring individuals.

➤ **Biased Evaluation and Feedback**

Evaluation criteria and feedback in performance assessments may be unintentionally influenced by gender bias, affecting how individuals are perceived and rewarded in professional settings.

To combat second-generation gender bias, it is crucial to foster awareness, education, and deliberate initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality. Companies can adopt strategies and measures that foster diversity and inclusivity, offer training programs to raise consciousness about bias, and actively strive to establish an atmosphere that appreciates and supports individuals irrespective of their gender. Likewise, individuals can play a role by questioning stereotypes, advocating for equal opportunities, and fostering a culture of respect and equity.

Recommendations for Women to Address Second-Generation Gender Bias

Second-generation gender bias refers to subtle and often unconscious biases that can hinder the progress of women in the workplace. Here are some recommendations for women to address and navigate second-generation gender bias:

1. **Self-awareness**

Develop self-awareness to recognize and understand any biases you may hold about yourself and others. This awareness is crucial for personal and professional growth.

2. **Seek mentorship**

Connect with mentors, both male and female, who can provide guidance, advice, and support in navigating your career. A mentor can offer valuable insights and help you navigate workplace challenges.

3. **Networking**

Build a strong professional network to expand your opportunities and gain exposure to different perspectives. Attend industry events, join professional organizations, and engage in networking activities.

4. **Negotiation skills**

Develop and hone your negotiation skills. This is crucial for salary negotiations, job offers, and career advancement. Women often face challenges in this area, so investing in Negotiation training can be beneficial.

5. **Advocate for yourself**

Be proactive in communicating your achievements, skills, and aspirations. Don't be afraid to articulate your goals and seek out opportunities that align with your career objectives.

6. **Allies and sponsors**

Identify allies and sponsors within your organization who can advocate for your advancement. Allies can offer support and guidance, while sponsors can actively endorse you for promotions and important projects.

7. **Promote a diverse and inclusive culture:**

Advocate for and participate in initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion in your workplace. This may include joining diversity committees, supporting mentorship programs, and encouraging inclusive practices.

8. **Continued education and skill development:**

Stay current with industry trends and continuously invest in your skills and knowledge. This not only enhances your professional value but also helps challenge stereotypes about women in certain roles.

9. **Flexible work arrangements:**

Explore and negotiate flexible work arrangements that suit your needs. This may include remote work options, flexible hours, or job-sharing arrangements. Flexibility can help you balance work and personal responsibilities.

10. Challenge stereotypes:

Address biases when you encounter them, whether they are directed towards you or others. Be an advocate for challenging stereotypes and promoting a more inclusive and equitable workplace culture.

11. Promote work-life balance:

Prioritize your well-being and establish a healthy work-life balance. This includes setting Boundaries, taking breaks when needed, and seeking support when managing multiple Responsibilities.

12. Stay resilient:

Recognize that overcoming second-generation gender bias may involve facing setbacks. Stay resilient and persistent in pursuing your goals, and seek support from mentors and peers during challenging times.

Addressing second-generation gender bias is a collective effort, and creating an inclusive workplace requires the collaboration of both men and women. By taking these steps, one can contribute to fostering a more equitable and supportive work environment.

II. Conclusion

Women must find ways to establish their role as leaders while also fighting to remove gender labels from leadership positions. Second-generation gender bias can make this transition more difficult for women, and simply acquiring new skills is not enough; they must also develop a strong sense of identity as leaders. To achieve better results, organizations should focus on understanding second-generation bias, providing safe spaces for leadership identity development, and encouraging women to embrace their leadership purpose. The role of each woman is crucial for the success of the venture. Although it is challenging to balance the demands of a leadership position with traditional family responsibilities, women should involve men as partners in this transition.

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