Challenges of Female Employee at workplace in India: A Qualitative Investigation

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Abstract

India is not an exception to the growing importance of gender equality and women's empowerment issues around the world. The number of women working in India has increased in recent years, but there are still big obstacles to overcome. Gender discrimination and bias are one of the biggest issues that Indian women workers must deal with. Gender-based prejudices and stereotypes still impede women's career advancement despite legal safeguards and affirmative action guidelines. A chronic gender wage disparity is caused by the unfair treatment of women, biased performance reviews, and the limited access to leadership roles. For female workers in India, balancing work and life is a huge difficulty. Women have a harder time juggling the personal and professional goals because of traditional gender roles and societal expectations. For female workers in India, workplace safety and harassment are still major concerns. Sexual, physical, verbal, and other types of harassment are regularly experienced by women.

Keywords: Biasness, Equality, Work Harassment, Decision-making, Leadership

Introduction:

India deals with gender inequality in addition to guaranteeing equitable access to educational resources and attaining fair economic advancement. India's sociocultural structure, which is firmly established in its rich cultural and historical legacy, upholds predetermined gender norms that exacerbate the gender equity gap. These sociocultural factors have a significant impact on a range of variables, including the organizational workforce, the social and political settings, and other areas. Despite the clear influence of these standards inside families and society, they are frequently seen as the norm (Srinivasan, V. 2012). Most of the labor force in India is made up of women, who make up a sizeable portion of the workforce. In India, 149.8 million women are employed overall, according to data given by the office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner. In this number, 121.8 million women labor in rural areas and 28.0 million do so in metropolitan areas. The data also shows that of the 149.8 million female employees worldwide, 35.9 million are engaged in agriculture through cultivation and an additional 61.5 million work in the sector as farm laborers. A further 8.5 million women engage in jobs

connected to home duties, while 43.7 million are classified as other workers (Arora, N., & Dhole, V. 2019).

According to studies, women in India continue to be paid less for the same work than males. In addition to undermining women's economic empowerment, the gender pay gap also reinforces gender inequality in society. It reflects structural differences in compensation arrangements. Female employees face significant challenges due to the lack of professional prospects. They are unable to move up the corporate ladder because women are underrepresented in leadership and decision-making jobs. Social expectations and cultural conventions frequently impose additional duties on women, such as caring and home tasks, which further impedes the ability to advance in the workforce (Klasen, S., & Pieters, J. 2015). The development of the Indian IT industry was made possible by the beginning of liberalization and globalization in the 1990s. Incentives from policy are provided by the Indian government to help the IT sector, including tax holidays for successful IT businesses. The business also benefits from several other factors, such as the substantial 12-hour time difference with most other nations, the availability of a sizable pool of inexpensively priced educated English-speaking workers, and the regulatory incentives. Inherent advantages of the IT industry also extend to other fields, such as providing employment chances for many educated unemployed adolescents who are especially attractive to women (Bhattacharyya, A., & Ghosh, B. N. 2012).

Women workers in India face a variety of difficulties at work, including limited career options, harassment, and social expectations, in addition to gender discrimination and uneven pay. It takes a multifaceted strategy to address these issues, including changes to organizational procedures, cultural norms, and educational programmes. India can make its workplace more egalitarian and prosperous for all its employees by creating inclusive work cultures, gender equality, and the empowerment of women. Significant barriers include challenges with work-life balance, harassment at work, lack of representation in leadership roles, and societal prejudices against certain professional paths (Batra, R., & Reio Jr, T. G. 2016).

Literature Review:

As per studies, women workers believe that going above the scheduled hours and being forced to finish other people's work presents a difficult situation, and they are unwilling to share the load. Because they believe that the husband's self-esteem is not diminished by being financially independent, the family expects to take an equal part in achieving their financial well-being. A woman's profession is more impacted by difficulties at home, and she may feel that her social commitments are at risk because of her job, which makes her more vulnerable to exploitation. Working alongside male coworkers, participating in corporate meetings, communicating in the workplace, adhering to policies and procedures, and dealing with other professional obstacles like demanding jobs and leadership roles present significantly greater difficulties than these situations (Sundari, R., & Sathyanarayana, P. A. 2012). Inequality in treatment or perception of people

depending on gender, usually favoring one gender over the other, is referred to as gender bias. It can take many different forms, including overt prejudice, unintentional biases, or institutionalized discrimination against a certain gender. Gender bias frequently results in unfair treatment and constrained chances for women working in India. Another effect of gender bias is limited prospects for advancement. Due to gender preconceptions that link authority and leadership with masculine attributes, they could not be given consideration for promotions or leadership positions (Datta, P. B., & Gailey, R. 2012).

When it comes to strategies for raising public awareness regarding workplace diversity, it is discovered that men and women professionals have very different opinions. Comparatively speaking, women learn to value and respect basic differences more than men does. Women also acknowledges the existence of diversity. Men are superior to women in this area, excelling in effective communication through active listening and seeking explanation when presented with doubt. Women, on the other hand, are more likely than males to avoid judging the importance of a message merely based on appearances, such as clothes, mannerisms, accent, or eye contact. In addition, compared to men, women exhibit a higher propensity to work together to achieve shared goals with people from different backgrounds (Patrick, H. A., & Kumar, V. R. 2012).

In the Indian workplace, women confront several difficulties and barriers to career advancement. These difficulties include a lack of possibilities for mentorship and sponsorship, a lack of access to leadership roles, and the glass ceiling problem. The lack of access to leadership roles is a key barrier to women's career advancement in India. Women are frequently passed over for executive positions and positions of decision-making due to gender prejudices and preconceptions. A common misconception is that leadership positions demand long hours, lots of travel, and a dedication that could conflict with gender roles and family obligations (Bharadwaj, S., & Jamal, T. 2020).

In a similar vein, there are few chances for sponsorship, when powerful people actively promote and encourage the career progress of women. Without the right direction and assistance, women could find it harder to negotiate the complexities of the employment pathways. Opportunities for female employees in India are further constrained by the absence of gender diversity and inclusion initiatives within organizations. Unconscious prejudices, unfriendly workplace cultures, and male-dominated work environments can make it challenging for women to join and contribute fully. Women's career development and success are additionally hampered by the limited access to networking and mentoring opportunities (Valk, R., & Srinivasan, V. 2011).

In India's traditional gender norms, men and women are given different tasks and obligations. Women are frequently expected to put the responsibilities to the families and the home ahead of the career goals. The pressure women feel from society to adhere to traditional gender stereotypes might make it difficult for them to pursue careers or hold leadership positions. The obstacles women in India encounter are also a result of societal expectations. It's frequently accepted

wisdom that a woman's principal responsibilities are those of a nurturer and carer. Women are therefore expected to put the families, marriage, and motherhood before the jobs. This presumption may deter women from seeking higher education or employment prospects, resulting in restricted access to resources and stagnant career advancement (Kabeer et al. 2013).

Women "experienced" socio-cultural repercussions as a result of the cultural expectations put on them, according to Mohanty and Jena (2016). Women were expected to prioritize their families over their jobs according to traditional gender roles, which led to a serious conflict between their personal and professional lives. Women's' sociocultural expectations frequently lead to fewer prospects for job growth and lower engagement in the economy. Women "were expected" to perform a variety of duties, such as taking care of the home, raising children, and caring for older family members. Women workers must strike a careful balance between their family responsibilities and career goals as a result. Work-life balance issues for women in India were "exacerbated" by a lack of supportive legislation and infrastructure. Organisations traditionally "had" a limited number of flexible work arrangement alternatives, like part-time employment or remote work options. Because of this lack of flexibility, women found it challenging to successfully balance their work and personal obligations. Working mothers also found it difficult to manage their duties due to the inadequate daycare options and restrictive maternity leave rules.

According to Gupta (2019) women have frequently been "subjected to" harassment, producing a hostile work atmosphere that not only infringes on their liberties but also "undermines" their ability to advance professionally and generally improves their well-being.The insufficient legal system has been one of the biggest obstacles to combating sexual harassment at work in India. Women have found it difficult to report instances of misconduct and seek justice since there isn't adequate legislation or proper implementation. This has also "perpetuated" an atmosphere of ignorance and impunity, enabling offenders to escape punishment and depriving victims of the necessary redress.Among both employers and employees, there is a serious problem with the lack of knowledge and training on sexual harassment issues. Many organisations have not set up efficient processes, such as Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs), to handle complaints and offer a secure setting for witnesses to come forward. Due to a culture where reporting instances of harassment is received with suspicion or victim-blaming, caused by a lack of awareness and support, women are discouraged from coming up. In addition, many women have been "deterred" from reporting harassment due to their fear of being retaliated against and the possible negative effects that could result. Women are frequently forced to keep quiet about sexual harassment because of the shame associated with it as well as cultural biases and judgements, which compromises their own wellbeing and chances for career progress. A multifaceted approach is necessary to combat sexual harassment at work. Along with bolstering the legal system, it also entails raising awareness among the workforce, sensitizing them to the issues.

Gupta (2017) showed that even when men and women have comparable backgrounds and experience, women frequently receive lower pay. This economic disparity caused by the gender wage gap not only persists, but it also threatens the financial security and independence of women. Additionally, the "underrepresentation" of women in leadership roles is a problem that Indian women frequently face. There were few opportunities for women to hold managerial or executive positions within organizations. The idea that women are less qualified or deserving of leadership positions is reinforced by the underrepresentation of women in higher-level jobs, which leads to the continuation of gender inequality. Taking on the deeply ingrained societal conventions and assumptions that support gender inequity in the workplace is essential if we are to successfully solve these issues. By putting in place procedures and policies that guarantee equitable possibilities for progression in the workplace and fair compensation, organizations may foster diversity and inclusion. Additionally, there is a need for focused initiatives like mentoring programmes and leadership development opportunities designed especially for women to assist them break through the glass ceiling and advance their careers.

The role of remuneration in helping women manage their job and personal lives was examined by Kar et al. (2019). They emphasized that due to a variety of issues, including long working hours, a lack of flexibility, and societal expectations, women frequently struggle to manage their professional and domestic commitments. The requirement for "dual roles" and duties is one of the main issues Indian female employees confront. While doing home activities and taking on caregiving responsibilities, women are expected to flourish in their employment. Women are under tremendous pressure since they must concurrently manage "multiple roles" as a result. The difficulties women have in juggling their professional and personal life are made even more difficult by a lack of support mechanisms, such as easily accessible daycare centers or family-friendly laws. In order to solve these issues and foster an environment that supports women in the workplace, adequate pay and flexible work options must be made available. Organizations may support the happiness and success of their female employees by respecting work-life balance and putting in place rules that help women manage their responsibilities. Based on the above discussion Figure 1 shows the various strategies to overcome the Challenges of Female Employee at workplace in India.
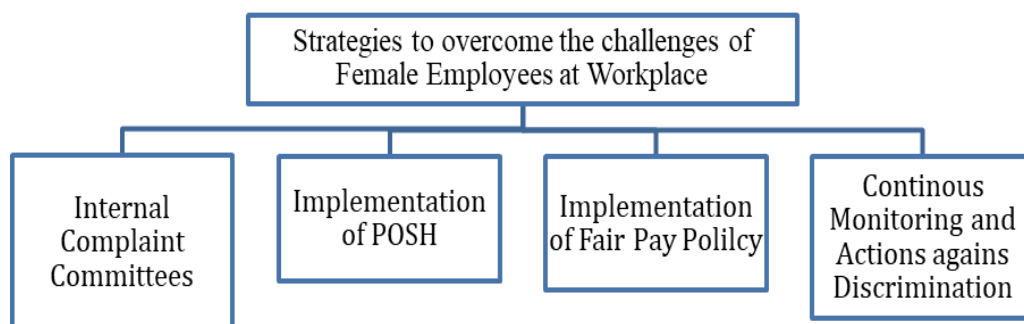

Figure 1 Strategies to Overcome the Challenges of Female Employees at Workplace

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Conclusion

In conclusion, there are numerous issues that need urgent attention about the difficulties that Indian women workers confront in the workplace. Despite tremendous advancements in gender equality and women's empowerment in recent years, several barriers still stand in the way of women's growth and full involvement in a variety of professions. Deeply ingrained social standards, cultural biases, and systemic impediments that restrict women's prospects and obstruct professional advancement are the root causes of these issues. In addition, women's job success is hampered by a lack of possibilities for skill development and professional improvement. Women's advancement inside organizations is hampered by gender differences in the availability of education and job training, as well as by biased performance reviews and few mentorship possibilities. Taking coordinated action is essential for businesses, decision-makers, and society at large. Stringent legislation against assault, harassment, and discrimination against women must be implemented and upheld.

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