



WOMEN IN INDUSTRY CHALLENGES AND RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

Women's participation in diverse industries has become a cornerstone of economic growth and innovation, yet they continue to face a range of challenges that hinder their full engagement and advancement in the workforce. This study explores the most significant impediments women face in the workplace, such as the gender pay gap, constrained leadership chances, harassment in the workplace, and the work-family rub. Although progress on gender equality has been made, these issues affect different sectors and are worsened by inadequate policies and support infrastructures in many workplaces. In addition to identifying these issues, this study examines the rights and protections that are available to women workers including women's rights as contained in international labor standards and, those that are provided for by national laws designed to safeguard workers' health, financial security and advancement opportunities. Equal pay, safe working environment, maternity leave and protection from discrimination and harassment are of key rights that help making the workforce more inclusive. It also discusses the role of trade unions, advocacy groups and government incentives in promoting gender equality, family friendly policies and resource provision for women workers. This research represents a comprehensive analysis of the fact that women have challenges in workplaces which need to be addressed, and that their rights are respected and enforced. Taking a long view, creating an equitable work environment is affirmative for both women and for organizational performance, diversity, and the resilience and inclusivity of the economy at large.

INTRODUCTION

With women increasingly entering into diverse sectors of the workforce, spanning technology and manufacturing, healthcare and finance, women are contributing indispensable skills, views and innovations that will help propel the growth of industry and the progress of the economy. Nevertheless, women still encounter specific workplace barriers that hamper their capacity to fully engage in, progress, and flourish in their careers. Issues such as the gender pay gap that persists even after controlling for various business and personal factors, lack of female representation at leadership levels, and society's expectations of family and



caregiving responsibilities negatively affecting careers are some of the major issues. Lack of support at work such as workplace harassment, inadequate maternity support and limited access to flexible work arrangements force many women to find it difficult to balance work and home life. It is necessary to respond to these challenges not only to ensure gender equality, but to create a work environment for women's work and opinion at all levels. The right to comprehensive rights and protections for women workers is widely acknowledged and with an increasing focus on gender equality in the workplace, at the global and country level. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations promote standards for women's rights, such as equal pay, safe working environment and paid maternity leave. These principles are embraced by many countries into their labor laws (like the labor regulation in Jordan) by creating protections for women workers and incentives to organizations that focus on gender equity. There is a general trend among organizations to employ anti-discrimination laws, equal opportunity employment and family friendly practices to create an inclusive work environment. Trade unions, women's rights groups and NGOs have lent support to these efforts working tirelessly to secure the closing of policy gaps and implementation gaps through sensitization and institutional and societal transformation. Though much has improved, there's still a long way to go to undo the underlying inequalities. Clearly, an understanding of, and, more importantly, a solution to the problems women encounter must be formulated and women's rights in the workforce must be respected in order to have a healthy, fair working unit. As a result, this research investigates the complex diverse issues of women in industry and evaluates strategies, policies, and rights that can assist women to advance, as well as to be safe in the workplace and have a healthy life both at home and at work, to create a fair and discharging place for women in all industries.

Need for the Study

By studying women's challenges and rights in industry we can make sense of and help to dismantle the systemic barriers that keep gender equality from the workplace. Whenever women participation in different sectors increases there is the need to ensure that they have equal opportunities, fair treatment as well as access to supportive resources. Specifically, women face challenges like the gender pay gap, lower access to leadership roles, discrimination and harassment, which prevent them from fully contributing and advancing in their careers. Yet, societal expectations around caregiving can add extra pressure on women, and family friendly policies and flexible on the job arrangements that recognize these



responsibilities are needed. Understanding these problems is important not only to enable women to progress their careers but also to help increase overall organizational productivity and empower a diverse and inclusive organizational culture. It is also important to understand how effective legal protections, like equal pay laws, anti-harassment policies, and maternity rights, are, in order to identify where gaps in policy remain and how enforcement can be strengthened. In order to examine the creation of equitable conditions for women, this research study will investigate the part of government regulations, organizational policies and advocacy efforts. The insights can in turn help to formulate practical recommendations for industries and contribute to policy change and promoting corporate practices that advance gender equality. The necessity of this study is grounded in the prospect of its contributions to build a fairer workforce that recognises women and protects their right to work; and bringing the best out of women professionally as an individual and collective contribution would benefit both the individual and wider economy.

Overview of Women's Growing Participation in Various Industries

Over the last decades, the participation of women in different industries has been steadily increasing, contributing to broadening of the workforce and the progress in different areas. More women are gaining higher education and specialized training and stepping into fields previously dominated by men – including technology, engineering, manufacturing and finance. It's a shift that goes beyond individual ambition and about broader social shifts prompted by equality between the sexes and economic inclusion. Historically fields like healthcare, education and service have had high women participation, however, women are now making their mark in fields that have been out of reach of women previously. They introduce diverse perspectives and allow innovation, and create a dynamically and inclusive workplace. While gender representation tends to differ by industry and region, studies consistently prove that companies with a more diverse team perform better, because diversifying the decision making process results in more sophisticated answers. However, barriers remain. In countries without strong parental leave policies, women often confront barriers related to the gender pay gap and obstacles to advancement, along with the challenge of reconciling work with familial responsibilities. In response, various organizations and governments have used policy to sweeten the pot in order to lure women into these opportunities, including mentorship programs, leadership training, and allowing flex time and remote work. The inclusion of women in the workforce not only helps companies but also is



good for the economy — as more women are in the workforce, productivity goes up, as do labor standards. Women’s increased involvement in various industries is moving toward a equitable and diverse global workforce.

Importance of Understanding the Unique Challenges and Rights of Women in the Workforce

It is critical to understand the unique challenges and rights of women in the workforce so that we can build a fair and inclusive work environment that allows women to contribute in the fullest and thrive. Distinct obstacles are faced by women which can impact their career progression, job satisfaction and overall wellbeing including gender pay gap, limited access to leadership positions and workplace discrimination. Many of these challenges arise from the established societal norms and biases that have deep roots in society and that can sustain inequality and limit women’s access to multiple opportunities in different industries. In addition, finding a healthy work family balance is still a challenge, women continue to carry a greater share of household responsibilities and caregiving, and therefore, have more potential for getting sidelined in their professional careers. Companies are able to recognize these issues and then implement policies that support women’s ability to take care of their personal life and that of their family while also sustaining a professional life. Women’s rights in the workplace—things like equal pay, protection from harassment, and access to maternity leave—must be known by everybody so that we have a workplace that everyone feels empowered and respected. Organizations that are committed to understanding and addressing these rights don’t just meet legal standards but create an environment of equity in which women can be loyal, productive and return from their maternity leaves with morale. Understanding benefits not only the individual women but it also benefits the organization and builds its reputation bringing on more diverse talent, and in creating long term business success.

Legal Rights and Protections for Women Workers

Women’s labor rights and workplace protections are, in large part, the cornerstone for the promotion of women’s equality, safety and fair treatment in the workplace. These include equal pay, safe working conditions and protection from discrimination and harassment, as well as the right to take maternity leave and parental leave. In particular, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and numerous other international standards and



conventions contain a global framework calling for gender equality and nondiscriminatory practices in workplaces. These frameworks define crucial rights and entice nations to aid in the codification of laws that promote gender equality, guard against workplace violence and augment safe experiences for women workers. Many countries, however, have at least some legislation at the national level protecting women's rights in the workplace, such as gender equality laws, maternity leave, and anti-discrimination. Anti-discrimination laws prevent women from being subject to biased treatment due to gender, pregnancy, or family status, and equal pay laws try and close the gender pay gap. Maternity leave laws allow women to take time off for childbirth without the fear of being fired off, and in a few places, there are extended parental leave options that help both parents more evenly share family responsibilities. The legal protections of these organizations not only protect women's rights but also promote the growth of women in equal opportunities in career without any discrimination. Without robust legal protections to advance women's rights in the workplace, create a diverse, productive and gender equitable workforce, and establish gender equality on a global scale, it won't work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

True, J. (2012). This thesis explores the political economy of violence against women, examining how design of the economy, society, and politics contribute to the prevalence and normalization of violence against women. In many cases, socioeconomic inequality, rigid gender norms and systemic power imbalances reinforce a culture that both condones violence and responds to it inadequately. For example, economic dependence and lack of resources can hold women fast in abusive relationships, as too are weak legal protections and strong patriarchal social norms limiting women's autonomy and safety. There is an underrepresentation of women in power to make important policy decisions, which can result in politics of countries overlooking or neglecting gender based violence. It also probes how violence against women is both outcome and cause of economic disadvantage: women barred from education, work and social mobility. Resolving these intertwined elements requires policies which economically enable women, increase their gender equality and create a legal framework that gives women protection, dignity and safety from violence, in general.

Cook, R. J. (Ed.). (2012). Gender equality and the dignity and freedom of women around the world cannot be realized without the human rights of women. While many countries have established laws and policies that guarantee women's rights, like access to education,



healthcare and equal pay, enforcement and cultural attitudes haven't caught up. In many regions, women are still limited by the rights to recover from gender based violence, kept out of decision making positions, and continue to be discriminated against. Internationally, there are human rights frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and conventions such as Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) that give legal basis for calling for women's rights across the world. These frameworks ask governments to get rid of systemic barriers and to protect women from violence, exploitation and discrimination. International conventions often only work as long as they are implemented at the national level, and thus require stronger accountability mechanisms and global solidarity to protect the rights and freedoms of women everywhere.

Farris, S. R. (2017). Femonationalism, the rise of feminist rhetoric used to serve nationalist interests, is the invocation of women's rights to support exclusionary policies (against marginalized or immigrant groups). To take advantage of this global gender discourse and turn it into xenophobic and anti immigrant stuff, they know that there is a — not just from the United States perspective but a global — conversation of gender equality, and this is how to protect women's rights: to protect national values. Women's liberation is invoked selectively in this context, meaning some issues like veiling, domestic violence or sexual harassment in some communities are discussed, but women's struggle in the mainstream cultural and national group is zealously downplayed and, in several cases, ignored. Policies purporting to save immigrant or refugee women from cultural practices can be a form of femonationalism, which fails to fix gender inequalities in the wider society. A dangerous combination of feminism and nationalism can erode legitimate gender equality by politicizing women's rights in such a way as to further cleave rather than bind communities.

Ross, L., et al (2016). " Undivided Rights: The article, entitled, "Women of Color Organizing for Reproductive Justice" emphasizes the intersectional method in which women of color have organized on behalf of reproductive rights (that go beyond the traditional pro-choice or pro-life debates). The reproductive justice framework, first articulated by women of color activists, includes the right to bear (or not to bear) children, to have children in safe and healthy environments, [access to] government public health services, and to raise children in communities removed from the shackles of poverty, violence and discrimination. Built on this framework, we focus on the important ways that race, class, and immigration status shape reproductive health, particularly in communities of women of color who suffer under



systemic oppression. These women challenge the limitations of what people typically mean when they talk about reproductive rights by asking for policies more targeted at their specific struggles, such as sterilization abuse, inadequate access to healthcare and forced migration. Therefore, reproductive justice is an all-encompassing, inclusive way of engaging gender, race and socioeconomic equality in the fight toward women's rights.

Boserup, E., et al (2013). Women play a key role in economic development and hence providing development must take into account contribution of women to the formal and informal economies. Several of which are a large part of the workforce in agriculture, healthcare, education and services where productivity and growth are driven. High household income, poverty reduction and general living standards of a population are the outcome associated with the involvement of women in the labor market. Women who have access to education, job skills training, and financial resources have greater ability to innovate, lead and become entrepreneurs. Economically empowering women can unlock untapped potential and contribute towards more sustainable and fair development. A lot of it comes right back to the family because women will often reinvest a large portion of the money back into their family, and in their children's education and health and that has longer term benefits on the society. Women's potential must be fully tapped into this by eliminating barriers including gender discrimination, unequal pay, and lack of access to those opportunities in all spheres of economic life.

Mohanty, C. T. (2014). "On Race and Voice: Challenges for Liberal Education in the 1990s" examines how racial identity and diversity posed significant challenges to liberal education during this period. As universities began to grapple with increasing racial diversity, the question of how to integrate the voices and perspectives of marginalized groups into academic discourse became a key issue. The 1990s saw a growing push from students and faculty of color to include more diverse viewpoints in curricula, while challenging traditional Eurocentric perspectives that dominated higher education. This shift raised questions about what constitutes a liberal education and how institutions could balance academic freedom with the need for inclusivity and representation. The struggle for racial equality within academic spaces mirrored broader societal debates about identity, power, and justice. These challenges highlighted the importance of fostering environments where all voices, particularly those of historically oppressed groups, are heard and valued in the pursuit of knowledge and critical thought.



Maternity Benefits and Parental Rights

Workplace gender equality also relies on maternity benefits, parental rights, including paid maternity leave, healthcare support, and reentry policies that support women workers. Maternity leave allows mothers ample time to rest after childbirth and to spend time with their newborns, and her main pressure will not be between balancing the money and family responsibilities. Maternity support is started by providing Health care benefit which cover the prenatal and postnatal care to guard the health of women during pregnancy as well as after delivery. Moreover, reentry policies, including phased returns and flexible working arrangements facilitate women's reentry into their roles with minimal career disruption and ultimately improve long term feminine retention. Parental leave policies differ greatly worldwide, but most countries lag far behind Sweden, Norway and even Canada in terms of paid extended leave and shared parental leave, which encourages both parents to participate in early childcare. Meanwhile, other countries, like the United States, have paid or at least unpaid leave, which takes more burden on the working mothers. Research shows that countries with strong parental leave policies are not only good for women's health and family well being, but those benefits also translate to career progression. Maternity support offers women a return to work with a secure commitment to their position and a career path to strive for without having to leave work to care for their family. Organisations and governments by encouraging family-friendly policies that create a healthy work – life dynamic can lead to a more inclusive workplace where women will have an opportunity to fully realize their potential to contribute to overall productivity and economic growth.

Right to Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Solutions

Equal pay for equal work is a fundamental dimension of gender equality in the workforce but the gender pay gap is prevalent in the local and regional labour markets. But in efforts to eliminate this disparity – for equal pay laws and regulations – women and men ought to be paid the same for the same work. Although many countries have passed these laws, their effectiveness and enforcement varies. Take the example of European Union – they have laws just for equal pay for equal work, but in some countries, including Iceland, they have gone a step further by legally obliging companies to acquire pay equity certification and audits. However, if these laws do prove effective, it's usually when regulatory frameworks — and the enforcement behind those frameworks — are strong. There are some things we need a lot more of, like pay transparency policies and salary audits, that can help us address the gender



pay gap more effectively. When companies make pay transparent and can share salary ranges, employees can see discrepancies themselves, and are able to hold employers accountable and create greater fairness. Whereas salary audits imply periodic pay practice evaluation to expose and remedy disparities inside organizations. Many countries, such as the UK, compel organizations of a certain size to file yearly gender pay gap reports which outline gaps, and inspires companies to address imbalances. Similarly, certain businesses are adopting structured pay scales, and doing away with negotiation driven discrepancies that usually favor men over women. In addition to closing the pay gap, these initiatives increase workplace morale, and trust whilst also making employers leaders of equitable practices. It is important to address the gender pay gap for achieving economic equality, promoting diverse talent and creating a fair and inclusive work environment for everyone.

Right to a Safe and Harassment-Free Workplace

Every employee, and particularly women who are disproportionately victims of workplace harassment and discrimination, have the right to work in a workplace free of harm and harassment. Workplace safety and anti-harassment policies set up a code of conduct, mandatory training, a zero tolerance mandate for harassment, as a way of preventing hostile behaviors. This process is aided by support systems, including confidential reporting channels, employee assistance programs and dedicated human resource teams, which allow people to raise concerns in safety. These policies are being implemented by organizations around the world realizing that a secure workplace creates a happy employee who stays longer, trusts and retains others, and is more likely to become an asset of an organization. Something like #MeToo raised very much awareness around the workplace harassment and gave the employees the courage to speak up and demand action. It also has put pressure on companies that even with the intimidation of these campaigns have taken harassment seriously and been more transparent. Therefore, there are many organizations that updated their policies, offered an anti harassment training and did whatever it takes to create a system tackling complaints an efficient and fair manner. In most countries, it is incumbent on employers to keep a place of work safe and they are, legally, expected to tackle any complaints of harassment quickly. Confidential reporting mechanisms, impartial and thorough investigations, and clear and prompt disciplinary actions for those who are guilty, are essential elements of effective complaint procedures. These steps will help to make sure complaints are handled sensitively and justly, protecting the rights of victims and promoting a



culture of accountability. A safe and harassment free workplace, not only defends its employees' rights, but helps in creating healthy, inclusive and productive organizational environment.

Role of Flexible Hours, Remote Work, and Family-Friendly Policies

Our flexible hours, remote work, and family friendly policies help employees — particularly women — better balance work and personal responsibilities. The flexible hours give employees the opportunity to arrange work schedules to better suit their family obligations while taking away some of the stress that comes with working and figuratively trying to juggle a handful of balls at the same time. Remote work takes flexibility to the extreme by erasing commute time and allowing employees to work in the environment that best supports their personal needs — a huge help for working parents. Both these options form a nurturing backdrop that encourages the continuation of women's careers, most of them being primary caregivers. For family friendly policies to promote inclusive workplace culture, policies like parental leave, on site childcare and phased reentry after maternity or parental leave are very important. Through these policies, which provide support during critical life stages, these policies reduce the risk of career interruptions because of family responsibilities and encourage women's career long engagement and progression. Moreover, these can create a culture of balanced work and family life, that all employees irrespective of the gender can benefit from. Flexible and family friendly practices will enable organisations to retain more diverse talent, increase job satisfaction and productivity. These policies indicate the organization's commitment to employees' well-being and diversity and help build an organization's employer brand and its reputation. If employees are given the support needed to maintain the balance between their work and personal life, the company is creating a workforce that is resilient, loyal and productive and a workforce that will be able to cope with the demands of the dynamic workplace.

Benefits of Work-Life Balance Initiatives on Women's Productivity and Well-being

Results show that women's productivity and well being go up when countries offer work life balance initiatives, such as flexible hours, remote work, and family friendly policies. Occupational initiatives of these types help women to discharge in a more effective way their professional responsibilities in conjunction with personal and family obligations which reduces the stress resulting from the role pressure. These policies offer the ability to shift work schedules around caregiving, doctor's appointments, or personal needs and by doing so



alleviate common stressors which have a positive effect on physical and mental health. Those women who have a healthy work life balance are more likely to feel happy and satisfied in life and work, supported and motivated, bringing in overall results into increased productivity and engagement. From an productivity point of view, work life balance initiatives enable women to unfold their work because there will be no distraction of unsettled personal requests. The studies point out that employees with good work – life balance have low burnout rates, high energy levels and more commitment to their roles that improve overall output. They are essential for women who, as is widely expected of them, bear the responsibility of family and household management and for whom such initiatives offer significant support to enable them to participate effectively and continuously in their professional life. The implementation of work life balance policies by organizations leads to an organization that boosts employee morale and loyalty to their workplace. This support also helps women to stay long term in their roles and not spend time changing jobs to then start over again, resulting in less turnover and the possession of a stronger talent pool for the company. In a nutshell, the overall work life balance initiatives are not only good for women's productivity and well being but also good assets for the development of an organization.

Importance of Women in Leadership Roles for Organizational Growth

Leadership positions by women offer unique perspectives, problem solving from a different angle and inclusive ways that are so important for any business to grow and to be successful. Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that companies with more representation of women in leadership positions outperform companies with less gender diversity as diversity of opinions yield more complete decision making and more robust ability to adapt to dynamic markets. In fact, female leaders prioritise collaboration, empowering the team, and ethical matters, all resulting in a work environment that enhances crew morale, loyalty and efficiency. By adopting this inclusive leadership style, it develops a culture where all staff are treated with the desired esteem and thus induced to contribute towards effectiveness of the entire organization. Women leaders act as role models for developing other talented women in the company to career advancement which in turn leads to the retention and development of diverse talent. More generally, women are confident their company supports gender equality and their career growth and they are more committed and engaged employees when they see women in leadership positions. In addition, companies with women in a leadership



role typically have a better handle on the varying needs of a diverse customer base, thus offering the ability to innovate products and services that make sense to demographic. In today's global business landscape, women in leadership are celebrated by organizations as progressive, socially responsible and desirable for talent and customers. Promoting women to leadership roles is not only an act of gender equity, but it furthers companies' sustainable growth, competitiveness and reputation in the sector in which they are operating. Women in leadership cannot be overstated; their unique contributions are imperative to making resilient, agile and thriving organizations in today's complex marketplace.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Workplace discriminatory treatment, unequal pay, under representation of women in leadership, restricted promotion facilities, insufficient family leave policies are some of the challenges that women industry faces. Hiring, promotion, and day to day interaction in the workplace are all persistently impacted by gender biases; workplaces can become hostile environments with higher turnover rates for women. Multiple policies exist to ensure gender equality but while they are present, they are inconsistently placed and many women do not know about their rights or, encounter barriers to asserting them such as fear of retaliation. Tackling these challenges is not only fair, but also necessary to promoting innovation and productivity benefits of diverse workforces. In this research, we analyze the particular barriers women face, assess the efficacy of current policies and offer recommendations for overcoming existing obstacles resulting in more equitable and supportive workplaces in the workplace across industries.

CONCLUSION

To attain a more equal and equitable workplace where women can fully contribute and advance without the pushback of systematic barriers, the challenges and rights of women in industry must be studied. While gender equality progresses, women around the world are still hampered by the gender pay gap, lack of leadership opportunities, and workplace harassment, factors that hinder career and wellbeing. This exposes the need for robust legal protections that encourage organizational policies and a cultural change to recognize gender bias in the workplace. This study looks at gaps in women's rights by reviewing rights such as equal pay, anti-harassment and maternity benefits that already exist. This research provides insights that will help guide policymakers, organizations, and advocacy groups in designing and developing initiatives to promote gender equality. With an understanding of these issues, we



can make informed, action oriented recommendations to achieve sustained change in women's advancement, as well as deliver on the current productivity and diversity goals of the workforce. The study also shows how much government policies, industry standards and supportive workplace practices can promote and make women strong members of a resilient, talented workforce. In the end, solving for the unique challenges faced by women in the industry is not only a matter of fairness but rather a strategic imperative for economic growth and innovation with a positive impact across organizations, communities and economies. As such this research provides a basis for the continued development of a more fair and balanced workplace for all.

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