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India Inc still reluctant to integrate women into workforce; more than 72% of women feel gender bias still exists: TeamLease study

Gender equality initiatives at India Inc are from a compliance perspective rather than bridging the gap states TeamLease report. According to the report, more than 72% of women feel gender discrimination is still prevalent at workplace. They attribute the unfairness to privileges men receive both at organizational and societal level, pro men practices, male dominated peer eco-system, and skewed career advancement pathways.

A detailed study on the magnitude, reasons and impact of gender bias on labour market, the report bursts the myth surrounding urban working women. As per the report the workforce participation of rural women is far higher than urban women. While only 20% of the women from urban areas entered the work, women constituted 30% of the workers in rural areas.

According to the report the onus for transformation rests as much on society as it does on policy measures. It attributed the under representation to socially induced stereotypical choice of higher education. More than 61% of women choose non professional courses reducing their chance to get gainful employment opportunities. From a sectoral perspective, though women participation is far from desired, with a representation of 6% and 5% at senior management roles BFSI and Software have a better career funnel for women. Meanwhile, Manufacturing & Engineering and Auto were the least receptive sectors.

Further from organisational initiatives perspective, according to the report there is a glaring mismatch between the programmes corporate are proposing and what the women employees are looking forward for. While organisations perceived initiatives like flexi time, leadership training, sexual harassment policies etc to be a game changer, majority of women employee felt these policies required greater boost. For flexitime employees felt it needs to be increased from the current 27% to 47%. The study also pressed on the need for wage parity to make corporate India more conducive for women workforce.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- India could add between 16% and 60% to its national income if women joined the labour force in proportionate measure. Achieving this requires India to recast its outdated societal outlook substantially.
- A transformational change in societal attitudes and beliefs is the need of the hour, to enable women with Education and Employment opportunities on par with men. The onus for such change rests as much on society as it does on policy measures.



- Women are severely underrepresented in most well-paying sectors and, at the same time, they are disproportionately well-represented in subsistence-income occupations such as care and agriculture.
- A transformational shift in the number of women at work could bring about long-desired outcomes of better parity with men across opportunity, role and rewards, autonomy and a strong voice in decision making and, finally, equitable sharing in household responsibilities.
- The number of women in the labour force is substantially lower than the number of men, across sectors. The predominant theme is their overwhelming population of sectors that require process-orientation rather than engineering effort.
- The labour force participation rate is significantly skewed towards rural women, so much so that the urban, well-qualified, working woman is more of a stereotype than a reality. Most urban, educated, women willy-nilly desist from joining in the labour force because of patriarchal taboos.
- The workplace bias against women is multidimensional – it creates effective resistance against women’s advancement in their career through stereotypical roles, inequitable wages, structural constrictions to progression and leadership.
- The root cause of bias against women arises from the labour market being largely male-dominated and having nurtured a masculine characteristic in its DNA. We deconstruct this root cause as a framework of Privilege, Practices, Peers and Pathways women are up in arms against.
- Survey findings indicate that there is significant divergence between employee expectations and organizational policies related to gender equality. Organizations are perceived by employees to be fulfilling compliance requirements more than actually effectively addressing inequality.
- In conclusion we propose a comprehensive, three-layered, approach that includes a foundational layer of parity and advocacy, a mid-tier of effective performance review and leadership pipeline capabilities, followed with adequately funded policy implementation.

Commenting on the findings Ms. Rituparna Chakraborty, Senior Vice President and Co-Founder, TeamLease Services Ltd, said, “Globally, employers are taking quick strides towards diversifying their workforce. We are confident these initiatives will seep into India also where diversity initiatives could potentially have the biggest impact and as recent studies suggest to the economic performance of a country.”

“Rather than victimhood or entitlement, we women must foster amongst ourselves a sense of equality.” added Ms. Rituparna

A detailed drill down, according to report ushering gender equality into the workplace needs a comprehensive approach. It will call for strong policy interventions like simplification of labour laws, easier access to funds, emphasis on distance or online education like MOOCs which offer specific occupational opportunities, dedicated matching infrastructure with job fairs, employment exchanges, matching apps, urbanisation, effective security measures both at workplace & transit, focused up skilling programmes and women friendly hygiene amenities.



An in-depth analysis the Gender Diversity Study tries to draw attention to the root causes of gender discrimination and provides suggestions for course correction. Administered on women respondents from organizations across India, it presents employment trends at entry, mid and senior levels. A comprehensive report it looks forward to stir an appropriate public discourse on transformational change – in society as well as in the workplace leading to equal opportunity in education, employment, career advancements and leadership.

About TeamLease Services Limited

Established in 2000 with 4 offices, 20 clients and 40 employees, TeamLease is one of India’s leading human resource services companies in the country. As on July 31, 2015, the company had 8 offices, 1000+ clients and 1,10,600 core employees across India. The company started with temporary staffing and then after adding permanent recruitment in 2004, expanded its portfolio to now become the one-stop provider of human resources services from temporary staffing to payroll processing, recruitment, compliance and training services. In the years 2014, 2013 and 2010 the focus was majorly on Education & Employability and applied for NETAP (National Employability through Apprenticeship Program), acquired IIJT and signed the MoU for TeamLease Skills University (TLSU) in Gujarat respectively. This complemented the larger mission of the company of ‘Putting India to Work’ by focusing on its vision of the 3 Es – Employment, Employability and Education. NETAP was rolled out this year (2014) and TLSU is operational in Vadodara. As of July 31, 2015, the company had 99,090 associates across the country and hired 1.12 associate employees.

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