

Human Rights Committee

Combating inequality in the workplace



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Introduction

Social equality is the aspiration of the current generation. Respecting good equality and diversity principles ensures equitable and universal access to services. They ensure that everyone is accorded the respect and dignity that they deserve, that everyone is treated equally, and that everyone's differences are respected. However, there are still big gaps in society that require attention. One of these differences is that of the workplace. One significant issue is the ongoing gender pay gap. Women are usually paid less than males for performing the same task. This salary difference not only affects individuals but also maintains structural gender inequity. Apart from gender, racial and ethnic disparities in the workplace also remain a significant cause for concern. People of colour often face barriers to advancement in their careers, such as glass ceilings that limit their opportunities for professional growth. Another facet of employment disparity is discrimination based on disability. Individuals with disabilities may encounter discriminatory attitudes, struggle to obtain employment, or receive inadequate accommodations. Furthermore, discrimination based on age is a widespread issue that mostly impacts senior employees. Age-related stereotypes about older workers doing less imaginative or adaptable work can lead to their exclusion from certain opportunities. Socioeconomic factors may also play a role in inequality, since individuals from lower-income households may have greater difficulty accessing opportunities for professional and educational advancement. Though progress has been made, it is imperative to acknowledge and take decisive action against the various forms of workplace inequality to promote inclusive workplace cultures where all individuals are given equal opportunities to thrive.



Definition of Key Terms

Gender Pay Gap

The pay gap that exists between men and women, which frequently draws attention to differences in pay for similar labour.

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)

Policies and programmes designed to ensure that everyone has equal chances in the workplace and that diversity is valued.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

The idea of equitable treatment in the workplace, which forbids prejudice on the basis of national origin, sex, race, colour, or religion.

Human Rights

Fundamental rights that everyone ought to possess. These rights refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Systemic Discrimination

Structural or institutional policies that support inequality and frequently have a disproportionately negative impact on marginalised populations.

Glass Ceiling

Invisible obstacles preventing some groups (women and minorities, in particular) from rising to senior leadership positions inside an organisation.



Affirmative Action

Policies and procedures aimed at reversing systematic and historical prejudice and expanding opportunity for disadvantaged groups.

Unconscious Bias

Implicit or inadvertent biases that colour judgement calls and frequently produce biased results.

Intersectionality

Social categories including race, gender, and financial class are interrelated and can create overlapping, interdependent systems of disadvantage or discrimination.

Socioeconomic Status

A person's status in society according to their occupation, income, and level of education, all of which might affect their possibilities and results at work.

Inclusive Leadership

Leadership philosophies that uphold inclusiveness, equity, and diversity while cultivating a happy and encouraging work environment.

General Overview

Gender pay gap

One indicator of how men and women are regarded in the workforce is the gender pay gap. It displays, as a percentage of male earnings, the difference in the (hourly rate of) compensation between male and female employees. The unadjusted and adjusted pay gaps are two separate but complimentary forms of the gender pay gap. Every metric offers a

unique perspective on salary disparities and where to find the underlying reasons behind them.

The difference in average gross hourly earnings between men and women, excluding overtime, is known as the unadjusted gender pay gap. It is based on salaries before social security and income taxes are subtracted, and it ignores any other variables that would explain the wages, including degree of schooling or prior work experience. All systemic disparities in compensation are identified by concentrating just on gender. The proportion of typical male earnings that represents the gap between the average wage of men and women. For instance, if the gender pay gap is 10% overall without adjustments, this indicates that women make 10% less money overall than males do.

The unadjusted gender pay gap ignores other factors that might account for salary discrepancies and solely considers gender. Nonetheless, a number of the structural causes of the gender pay gap are associated with variations in factors including length of employment, educational attainment, and job experience. The amount that is left over after accounting for these variables is referred to as the adjusted gender pay gap. The difference in compensation between men and women after accounting for other criteria like seniority, job level, education, experience, and performance is known as the adjusted pay gap.

Discrimination

Beyond only resulting in unequal pay, inequality in the workplace also disproportionately affects women from varied backgrounds, including LGBTQ+ and women of colour. These people frequently deal with difficult issues, such as obstacles to rising to leadership roles and recurring microaggressions, or hurtful remarks or inquiries based on a person's race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. The intricacies of workplace inequality are further complicated by racial and ethnic inequities, since persons of colour often face discriminatory hiring and promotion practices, compensation disparities, and a lack of representation in leadership positions. The pervasive influence of both historical and structural racism is reflected in the dynamics of the workplace, requiring focused efforts to eliminate deeply rooted inequality.

Age discrimination is included in workplace inequality and has subtle effects on workers of all ages. Hiring decisions that restrict chances for people at different career stages are influenced by biases arising from misconceptions about creativity and



adaptability. This is especially true in industries that are changing quickly and with changing workforce demographics. Furthermore, people with disabilities face unique difficulties not only in obtaining employment prospects but also in navigating businesses that could not provide adequate accommodations. Opportunities for career advancement are shaped by the complex interactions between socioeconomic conditions and workplace inequalities. It might be difficult for people from lower-income families to enrol in good training, mentoring, and educational programmes. Discrimination is made more severe by the intersectionality of social identities, such as race, gender, and socioeconomic class. In businesses, unconscious prejudices that are engrained in cultural stereotypes penetrate and impact employment decisions, promotions, and evaluations.

Major Parties Involved

The United States

The United States has anti-discrimination statutes in place and acknowledges employment disparity. Talks on reducing racial inequities, fostering diversity, and narrowing the gender wage gap are ongoing. The goal of programmes and policies is to give everyone equal chances.

European Union

The EU places a strong emphasis on the value of equality and against discrimination. It has put policies and programmes into place to combat age discrimination, advance gender equality, and resolve disparities in the workplace. The EU promotes inclusive policies among its member nations.

Japan

Japan has issues with traditional labour arrangements and gender inequality. In an effort to foster diversity and boost women's employment, efforts are being



undertaken. Workplace relationships are still impacted by society expectations and cultural conventions, nevertheless.

Scandinavian Countries

These nations are frequently seen as pioneers in efforts to promote gender equality. Policies emphasise the promotion of a healthy work-life balance, flexible work schedules, and parental leave. Their goal is to establish gender-neutral workplaces that provide equal opportunity for men and women.

India

Awareness of workplace inequalities, including discrimination based on caste and gender, is rising in India. With an emphasis on strengthening marginalised populations and fostering inclusive workplaces, initiatives seek to solve these problems.

South Africa

South Africa discusses employment inequalities in light of its apartheid past. Affirmative action and empowerment initiatives are prioritised in policies designed to address historical injustices and advance diversity and inclusivity.

Australia

Australia places a strong emphasis on inclusion and diversity in the workplace, with laws that address disability, gender, and race. The main goals of initiatives are to close the gender pay gap, provide equal opportunities, and foster an equitable and welcoming workplace.



Brazil

Brazil recognises differences in the workplace, particularly those related to gender and race. With the use of laws and public awareness campaigns, initiatives seek to address these problems, support diversity, and establish more welcoming employment environments.

China

China has to deal with issues of age and gender discrimination. In an effort to solve these problems, efforts are focused on advancing equal opportunities and challenging gender stereotypes in the workplace.

Canada

In the workplace, diversity and inclusion are actively promoted in Canada. The main goals of policies are to promote wage equity, combat systemic discrimination, and foster inclusive settings for people from a variety of backgrounds.

Timeline of Events

Date **Description of events**

- 1872 Belva Ann Lockwood persuaded the U.S. Congress to pass a law guaranteeing equal pay for women employed as employees.
- 1963 Equal pay act was passed.
- 1964 Civil Rights Act granted equal rights to woman in all employment areas.
- 1970 Women's Liberation Movement.
- 1980 Glass ceiling concept emerges.
- 1990 The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted.
- 1991 Civil Rights Act of 1964 was amended to allow women to sue employers for sexual harassment.
- 2016 The United Kingdom introduces mandatory gender pay gap reporting.
- 2020 COVID-19 pandemic impact
- 2022 Global Corporate diversity pledges



Previous attempts to solve the issue

In many organizations, gender pay parity has grown to be a contentious issue. In addition to the vocal opposition of public figures such as legislators to the gender pay gap, there has been a surge of high-profile litigation against large businesses, mostly in the United States, with all the negative publicity and associated financial consequences.

In response, several firms have employed external pay experts and law firms to identify whether there may be a problem with the pay gap from either an HR or legal perspective and to suggest viable remedies. But in view, the most frequent procedures for recognizing a wage gap and addressing it are full of dangers for the unwary. This is due to the fact that it's a challenging task: accurately assessing the difference and determining how to close it without drastically raising payroll, all the while genuinely assisting individuals who are underpaid, preserving incentive systems, and averting the formation of new legal obligations.

As more companies deal with pay equity issues, people have done comprehensive research on the most often used strategies used by companies to address the wage gap, as well as how often these strategies fail or lead to additional problems. They found that closing the gender gap without considering cost effectiveness can be prohibitively expensive; however, focusing just on cost only exacerbates the situation.

Possible Solutions

Diversity and Inclusion training

Diversity and Inclusion Training: Providing thorough training on diversity and inclusion to staff members at all levels will help them become more sensitive to and aware of the different types of workplace discrimination. By addressing implicit prejudices, stereotypes, and microaggressions, these initiatives should foster a more courteous and inclusive workplace. By assisting staff members in comprehending



the various viewpoints and experiences of their peers, this instructional strategy fosters empathy and teamwork.

Transparent pay practices

Transparent Pay policies: In order to address the gender pay gap and other wage discrepancies, it is imperative to establish transparent pay policies. Fair compensation can be achieved by performing routine pay equity audits, making the pay ranges for different positions public, and making sure that objective standards are used to determine salaries. Employee trust is increased by this openness, which also makes companies responsible for addressing and resolving any wage disparities that may already exist.

Inclusive leadership programs

The creation and promotion of inclusive leadership initiatives is crucial to removing structural obstacles to professional growth. These initiatives ought to concentrate on finding and developing diverse talent, offering chances for sponsorship and mentoring, and paving the way for underrepresented people to rise to positions of leadership. Within their teams, inclusive leaders actively promote diversity and equity, cultivating an environment that values and celebrates individual differences. Long-term structural transformation in the workplace can be facilitated by organisations through the development of a pipeline of diverse leaders.



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