

Ways employers can promote equity in workplaces

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Women are entering the workforce now more than ever and excelling in their respective fields. Fostering an inclusive culture in the workplace can significantly take your company's success to the next level. Numerous studies have shown that gender-inclusive workplaces elevate underrepresented voices, improves employee retention, responds to challenges more effectively while meeting or even exceeding their financial targets, as diverse workplaces allow unique opinions, perspectives, viewpoints, insights and ideas to contribute to the success of the organisation.

Therefore, employers need to get the equation for gender-neutrality right to overcome institutionalised gender-discrimination in the workplaces.

Here are some approaches you can implement to stamp-out gender inequality in your workplace:

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Gender identity should not bar individuals from having access to opportunities; be it receiving an interview-call or being considered for promotion. The impact of the biased mindset starts at the very recruitment or talent acquisition process. Hence, employers can keep their job description gender-neutral to welcome non-male candidates who have the required certifications, skills or qualifications. They can also review the interview questions by putting together a diverse interview panel to get a holistic view of the applicants. Apart from that, assessment of merit and task allocation need to be free of prejudices that do not limit employees by the assertion of gender roles. Everyone, irrespective of gender, should have exposure to standard opportunities.

CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP

Another disappointing constructed barrier women have to deal with is that they are paid less than men for the same amount of work. Even today, many companies are not transparent enough and fail to achieve wage equity. Patriarchy cannot be encouraged in an organisation, and this has to be ensured. Fair pay can be ensured by conducting a payroll audit, which can help employers identify disparity among workers. Furthermore, highlighting your company's stance on this matter can be a signature move for balancing empowerment.

CREATE A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Gender discrimination is not the only concerning factor in job sectors. The unfortunate instances do not end there.



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

Women are more vulnerable to sexual harassment at the workplace than men, and necessary measures are to be taken by your company to provide your workers healthy working spaces to be comfortable while working to help them focus on their work harnessing their full potentiality. A safe working environment is a basic human right. This right should not be violated. Employers need to try their best to ensure that your company effectively prevents gender-based sexual harassments or any form of sexism or misconduct in the workplace. Setting up equity bodies following proper HR practices and strict guidelines can be a step towards that.

FACILITATE THE EMPOWERMENT

Employers need to be proactive in eradicating this deep-rooted systemic

problem at the very foundational base to demonstrate their organisation's commitment to inclusion. There are many causes for the decline in the participation of female workers. Many are forced to leave their jobs due to inadequate parental or maternity leaves, insufficient day-care facility, unfavourable office hours etc. Dedication to work and performance comes before how long they stayed at the workplace. Employers can ensure that their needs are met at the company. Inconveniences and shortcomings hinder growth and productivity, so resolving constraints is better than excusing unequal treatment. The framework of the company needs to be structured in such a way that enables everyone to do their parts with ease for

the progression of the company.

A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

Only the employers' efforts are not enough to tackle this complex issue. They can take regular feedback from your employees to evaluate where your company stands. Feedbacks are essential for the overall development of the employees, as well as the company. Men need to be active participants in this initiative to progress towards an efficient workplace so, engage them to eliminate ignorance, unintentional biases, and even subtle partialities. You can arrange mandatory company-wide gender sensitivity programs, workshops, or training sessions to discuss the employees' concerns, preferences and improve empathy to get rid of gender-stereotyping or unconscious biases. The work-culture of your company needs to embrace non-discriminatory practices where every voice is heard, every opinion is appreciated and every individual is respected.

Gender discrimination, especially in the workplaces, has been harboured for centuries. Women workers are bringing in revenues and economic success to the country. It is high time we gave women their due credit for their contributions. The good news is, we do not have to start from scratch to do that. The constitution of Bangladesh endows good policies.

Bangladesh is already going in the right direction in terms of gender parity, with companies offering equal opportunities to both their male and female workers.

However, there is still room for improvement. Collective effort is needed to diminish sexual harassment as well as the wage gap. Bangladesh has started making strides in addressing these issues; you need to be part of that change as well.

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