



FEMINISING WORKPLACE - PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES

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Abstract

Having more women in the organisation means increased profitability and productivity. This has not been realised by companies. At least, female employee are not left fend for themselves. They are subject to rape, murder, denials and other forms of harassment.

HR professionals use on diversity enhancement initiative is disappointing. If “P&G” and “Xerox” have benefited from diversity, why not other organisations?

Key Terms

- Discrimination against women
- Feminising workforce
- Women and profitability
- Diversity initiative

As days go by, organisations are increasingly feminizing themselves. It is a pleasant scene to observe women competing with men in skills levels, designations, responsibilities and leadership positions. It is pointed out that organisations having more number of females are more profitable than those having less of them.

Recently, McKinsey Global Institute pointed out that full participation of women in the workplace would result in 26 percent increase in world gross product (GDP) by 2016. Similar sentiment was expressed by the chief of IMF. The MD of IMF said that GDP of India would expand by 27% of more women participate in workplace.

It has also been observed that women lend colour to the organisations tend to keep trade secrets, good at relations skills, loyal and non-unionized. So far so good. The other side of the picture is disturbing.

Before coming to the discrimination meted against women at work places. It is useful to take a look at how women in general are subject to crimes in our society. It may be observed that what happens in society gets repeated in organizations too. Women and Men in India Report 2012 reveals various crimes committed against women during 2010 and 2011. (seeTable 1)

Table 1: Crime Against Women

| S. No | Cause | 2010 | 2011 |
|-------|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1 | Cruelty by husbands and | 94041 | 99135 |
| 2 | Molestation | 40613 | 42968 |
| 3 | Kidnapping and abduction | 29795 | 35565 |
| 4 | Rape | 22172 | 24206 |
| 5 | Dowry deaths | 8391 | 8618 |
| 6 | Sexual harassment | 9961 | 8570 |
| 7 | Immoral trafficking | 2499 | 2435 |

It is sad that women are subject to crimes though we claim our country as a huge democracy, high civilization and highly respected for women.

Coming to the business organizations, scenario is no better. We hear about women in cabs being murdered, they being raped and are highly discriminated against. Business executives talk about diversity but mostly remain un-walked.

Randomly we spoke to 10 Bangalore based HR professionals and requested them to share their views on diversity- enhancing initiatives. Their responses are summarised in table 2.



Table 2: How Far They Went

| S. No | Diversity Initiatives | Nose | Percentage |
|-------|--|------|------------|
| 1 | Diversity team | 6 | 60 |
| 2 | Senior leaders tasked with promoting diversity | 5 | 50 |
| 3 | Flexitime provisions | 7 | 70 |
| 4 | Offer leadership programs specific to women | 4 | 40 |
| 5 | Maternity care | 8 | 80 |
| 6 | Job sharing | 3 | 30 |

(Percentage exceed 100 because of multiple options)

Organisations score high on maternity care @80%, followed by flexitime provisions @70%, diversity team @60%, and least on Job sharing @30%.

Obviously, organisations need to travel a long way to make them highly cosmopolitan. More than visible facilities there are others which need to be nurtured if women feel reassured and motivated.

Men employees may be nice and good to women counterparts, but fail to take care when a female employee feels being neglected. There is also culture and stereotyping mind-set that need to be changed. It is a fact that men are preferred to women while hiring employees at any level. Mind-set should change.

Mind-set should change because diversity offers potential benefits to firms. Xerox Company, for example, has become 30% more productive because of diversity. Procter and Gamble (P&G) has 30% to 40% hike in productivity because of cosmopolitan workforce. These two cases are only examples. There are several more such organisation which are benefiting from diversity.

References

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