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### **ABSTRACT:**

Gender-based discrimination against women in the workplace has been generally dictated by the driving factors found in females, defined by them being family-oriented, risking to divert attention from work and fault performance due to pregnancy, appearing to be less physically strong, which may deprive them from a job-related activity requiring good physical strength, or even being threatened to be subjected to a sexual harassment. Nonetheless, the abovementioned reasons do not undermine women's ability to be valuable employees, fulfill their responsibilities with excellent performance and significantly contribute to their workplace's success. Women discrimination can come in different forms. Rejecting employment, withholding promotions, sexual harassment, preventing women from participating in training opportunities, and cutting off wages are all forms of discrimination. The aftermath of discrimination against women in the workplace includes, but is not limited to reduced productivity, diminished company revenue, high employee turnover, low morale, undermined reputation on the market and criminal and administrative responsibility.

### **Introduction:**

For well-developed, democratic countries hold a fundamental principle of promoting equality between men and women in all spheres of social, cultural and economic life ((Michailidis, Morphitou & Thelophylatou, 2012). Still, gender equality hardly seems to be fully achieved within the international

workforce, let alone third-world countries. Women's underrepresentation, especially in top managerial positions, is both triggered by and restraining women being treated the same way as men. Once one's employment and promotion are based solely on a particular employee's performance instead of employer's preferences and biases, the firm is more likely to develop positively and avoid inefficient management practices.

### **Reasons of women discrimination:**

Despite anti-discrimination legislation, ethnicity and gender still appear to play as screening tools during job interviews and selection to positions (Åslund & Nordstroem, 2012). Firstly, it is necessary to define the main reasons of women discrimination in the workforce. Some scholars suggest that so-called glass ceiling can be explained by observed and unobserved differences in men and women work-related performance and characteristics, namely career decisions, preferences and risk behavior, timing of childbirths and choice of partner and spouse (mainly for females) and the other gender gap factors (Smith, Smith & Verner, 2013). Women's commitment to family and children often makes their employers think of them as unreliable and unstable workers, who can abandon their position at any level for the sake of dedication to children and house chores. However, a recent tendency in growing feminism concepts, the female followers of which decide to focus on their career growth rather than strong commitment to family, at least during young and middle age, is often left aside and outshadowed by a general perception of women considering family and children to be their prime goal. In most Asian and Muslim countries, for example, cultural attitude toward childcare and family and the lack of

government support in the same spheres adds another burden on women, which are forced to settle with less paid and more demanding jobs (Barsh, Devillard, Wang & McKinsey, 2012). Nonetheless, inability of employers to trust female efforts to balance their work and family life and contribute to the socioeconomic life of their country deprives the employers of qualified and responsible workers ready to serve their business's and organizations' development. Also, taking into consideration a drastic increase in single-parent households, it is evident that females are willing to obtain a position of any corporate level just to be able to secure stable income for their children.

### **“ Sticky floors” concept:**

Secondly, along with glass ceiling syndrome, the concept of “ sticky floors” is used as a contemporary alternative explanation of a few women being promoted to the top positions (Smith, N., Smith, V., & Verner, M. (2013). This concept describes the occurrence in which the driving assumption of women being superior to men in ability of non-market, unwilling to travel for work-related tasks due to family and childcare and appearing to be less flexible and less likely to seek for alternative positions in other organizations of related fields. Under such tendency, women are often offered lower wages and less training and promotion opportunities than men.

### **Unintentional discrimination:**

Also, psychological evidence suggests that, in most cases, gender discrimination may be unintentional and not be dictated by any straightforward factors (Heyman, Svaleryd & Vlachos, 2013). In this case,

companies need to make establishment of well-functioning human resource management their first priority in order to reduce the changes of implicit discrimination to minimum. True, that HR representatives' personal preferences and motives do not play the last role in their final decision as to which applicant is the most suitable for a certain position. Much depends on the type of position offered as well, as women are often not regarded to be capable of taking on a position which requires much physical work and working under pressure. However, some preliminary professional test and trainings observations apparently give a better picture of one's capabilities rather than reliance of assumptions and stereotypes. As stereotypes are mainly based on perceptions, beliefs and self-concepts on both conscious and unconscious levels (Michailidis, Morphitou & Thelophylatou, 2012), they are also included into so-called unintentional discrimination. For example, high managerial positions are considered to be requiring more masculine characteristics to be handled with success, such as the ability to work under pressure, take decisions on spot, being good at time-management, staying organized and level-headed. Although the psychology of men and women may differ, it has not been proved that males can fulfill all due responsibilities better than females when put under the same conditions. Also, no one can undoubtedly state that women do not possess the traits which are beneficial for a top-managerial positions, as women are believed to be ambitious, attentive to details, assertive and able to think critically, which are considerable pluses for the top seats. Therefore, the idea of efficient management practices replacing poor ones needs to be seriously

considered by the organizations intending to develop within the market and form a strong workforce (Heyman, F., Svaleryd, H., & Vlachos, J. (2013).

### **Some statistics on women discrimination in the workforce:**

Eliminating the theoretical assumptions, although they have been defined via extensive researches, surveys and analysis and present the background for researching the issue, empirical evidence in form of statistics and real-life situations gives a great insight into the current tendencies of women discrimination in the workforce. For example, according to Ibarra, Carter & Silva (2010), a 2008 Catalyst Survey showed that the women who graduated from top MBA programs from all over the world are paid \$4, 600 less in their first post-MBA jobs compared to men with the same qualifications. Moreover, women occupy lower-level management positions and show less career satisfaction than men with the same education background. The same source, focused on researching whether or not women receive equal mentoring and trainings as men, admits that according to 2008 Catalyst survey, 83% of women and 76% of men have had one mentor during their careers, while 21% of women and 15% of men have had four or more mentors. Nevertheless, the survey shows that as many as 72% of men have received at least one promotion by 2010, while the percentage of women for the same is 65%. The reason for such inequality might be the fact that women are less likely to be actively sponsored. Also, since women usually tend to start their careers at lower-level positions, intending to climb the corporate ladder progressively, unlike men who appear to be more likely hired on a superior position at the start of their career and are oriented towards the highest-level jobs, women advance in their careers much slower

and receive bonuses in form of sponsors' advocacy and training rarer than men. Another research conducted in Cyprus shows that over a half of the participants (58, 9%) agree that men and women can be equally good managers (Michailidis, M., Morphitou, R., & Thelophylatou, I. (2012).

### **Wall Street experience:**

Such influential and authoritative financial market as Wall Street has had its instances of spending hundreds of millions of dollars to cover up sex discrimination suits while denying that any kind of discrimination ever occurred (Roth, 2007). The same source states that Wall Street has undertaken numerous initiatives, such as telecommuting, sexual harassment policies and implementing paid maternity leave in order to reduce gender discrimination. Though as good as it sounds, those initiatives did not make up for a firm background of complete demolishing of discrimination within the walls of Wall Street. The reason for it is clear: covering up for outright violation of women rights does little to change the underlying attitudes formed during past decades. Making the working environment more liability-conscious does not resolve the issue of women being declined promotion and bonuses and does not bridge the gap in wages.

### **What can be done to reduce women discrimination:**

With the main reasons fueling discrimination of women in the workforce having been determined and described, the question of what is the best way to reduce gender discrimination remains open. Evidently, international labor market needs to drastically change the perception of women and step away from the stereotypes which are getting old and incredible. Many women

have shown it on their own example that females are capable of successful running the business and have all characteristics, skills and rights to become CEOs and presidents of authoritative companies worldwide. For example, former president and CEO of eBay (online trading company), President and CEO of Avon Products (world's leading direct seller of beauty and related products), Chief Operating Officer of Facebook (world's largest and most popular social network) and CEO of Yahoo! are all women, who have paved their way on top through hard work, dedication, persistence, proficiency in the field and excellent managerial skills. Their examples prove that although gender discrimination still exists in the workforce, it should by no means deprive talented women of taking their well-earned place in their sphere.

### **Conclusion:**

In order to minimize the risks of gender discrimination, many Human Resources departments in companies all over the world have adopted a practice of anonymous application procedures (Åslund, O., & Nordstroem, O. 2012). Such practice does not let employers' biases enter at hardly any stage of preliminary evaluation of applicants' skills and qualifications and, thus, makes women discrimination barely possible. In the perfect world, however, such practice would not be required, since any gender-biased limitations would not be present at any stage or level of potential employees entering the workforce. Since the reality is such that women discrimination stills takes place in modern world, employers need to remember that they are firstly looking for an employee perfectly capable of fulfilling the entitled duties, and any prejudices or biases should not stand in the way of hiring a skillful and responsible worker.



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