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Gender Diversity Inclusion at Workplace

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ABSTRACT: Gender Diversity most commonly refers to an equal ratio of men and women and frequently in the news you will read stories about gender diversity in corporate boardrooms and other areas traditionally dominated by men. Some of the most common industry areas that see a dominance in male employees over female is in computing, engineering, medicine and science. Whilst most of us agree that in order to have a fair and productive working environment, an equal balance of men and women is required, more commonly than not, this is not the case despite the modern age that we live in. Gender diversity in a work place means that men and women are hired at a similar and consistent rate, are paid equally and are given the same working opportunities with the same promotional opportunities. Having equal opportunities available to you that aren't limited by your gender

KEYWORDS: gender diversity, inclusion, workplace, environment, dominance, employees

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak and its simultaneous effects on organizations have ushered a deep sense of ambiguity for all. Most people face stress, anxiety, and panic while adjusting to the new means of remote working and taking care of their families at the same time. In the new normal, employees are looking towards business leaders to give support and direction over crucial issues, including job safety and lay-off. For this reason, Diversity and Inclusion have become imperative. To succeed in this new normal, it has become essential to redefine the entire idea of diversity at the workplace. In the organizational ecosystem, COVID-19 has had a substantial impact on several stakeholders. For many working women, it has fluctuated their work-life balance. It is stirring their physical and mental well-being, and some are even doubting their long-term career possibilities. Organizations that do not have sufficient female employees lack diverse opinions, innovation, and even profits. An organization that values diversity is more likely to have financial returns beyond their national industry medians. Companies with gender diversity are more successful in keeping a low turnover rate, which significantly decreases their expenses. Moreover, they exhibit more innovation and make more intelligent decisions. Gender Diversity refers to an even ratio of men and women. Some of the most well-known industry areas that see male employees' dominance over females are computing, manufacturing, medicine, and science. Men and women's equal balance is required for a fair and productive working environment, more commonly than not. Gender diversity in a workplace means that men and women are hired at a comparable rate, paid evenly, and given the same working opportunities with equal promotions. Women,² who account for 40% of the global workforce, only about 5% of those are in the upper management positions. Even then, yearly salaries for men in the same positions are not similar. Gender diversity is something most organizations aim to achieve. While reputation is important, gender diversity has many other pressing and substantial benefits related to an organization's bottom line. Companies with gender diversity exceed their competitors and realize higher profits! Gender diversity is essential.³ Warranting fair representation of women in the workplace can have positive outcomes across the organization. Excellence does not discriminate between genders. Instead, it identifies skill and good management. That is why the most respectable organizations are open to a diverse and equitable work environment, promoting gender equality. Diversity in ideas and methods of thinking is vital to the success of a business venture. Great leaders understand that, and they use diversity to nurture growth, not to restrict it.⁴

Benefits of Gender Diversity in the Workplace

1. Diversity in Age, Ethnicity, and Race goes a long way!

Both employers and employees must have obligations to develop and observe racial, ethnic, and age diversity in the workplace. Both parties must work collectively to ensure the realization of a company's diversity initiatives. To



successfully launch diversity initiatives, organizations must take a structured approach. It requires assuaging perceptions of uncertainty about the company's future and efficiently delivering new policies directed at defending workers belonging to specific racial, ethnic, and age-related groups. Employees must have extended conversations about race, age, gender, and sexual orientation, irrespective of whether they are restrained by company policy or not. It presents a unique chance for employers to offer direction on having essential discussions about demographic differences. One's prejudices about race, age, and gender influence the decisions we make at work every day. Despite our best attempts, our biases influence whom we hire, whom we improve, and support. In an increasingly global economy, a diverse workforce is a business imperative. Organizations can ill afford to overlook that discussing these subjects can help develop workplace relations among all employees.⁵

2. Varied Perspectives

Gender Diversity in the workplace means that employees are more likely to have various abilities and experiences. Employees in a company with greater gender diversity will have access to multiple views, which is highly useful for outlining and accomplishing a business strategy.

3. Improved Collaboration

Having women on teams can help develop team processes and promote collaboration. Women are better skilled in reading non-verbal cues. Groups with more women were more adept at taking shifts in conversation, making the most of the group's blended expertise and skills.

4. More Comprehensive Talent Pool

Organizations that do not support women to join them miss out on half the population's expertise and skills. Tapping into these can make a massive difference to a company's bottom line.⁶

5. Increased Staff Retention

An inclusive culture in the workplace promotes confidence and opportunity. Inclusive workplaces tend to have low employee churn rates, signifying significant gains in time and money spent on recruitment.

6. More Innovation

In a diverse workplace, employees experience various views and opinions. When these multiple aspects meet, they often come together in unique ways, unlocking more innovation.

7. Enhanced Productivity

Gender equal workforces operate better in various ways. One of the significant advantages of increased gender equality in the workplace is a more cohesive and productive workforce. Diversity of opinion drives to a more holistic way and, consequently, a more remarkable achievement.⁷

8. Flexibility

Women around the world do most of the voluntary caring. It negatively influences their career and income chances. A more adaptable work culture can reduce or eradicate this issue. Telecommuting and part-time jobs are an advantage everyone can savor. Contrary to common belief, it does not hurt productivity.⁸

9. Reliable Workforce

When employees feel prohibited, they do not stick around. That means that organizations that do not have gender equality run the risk of failing to draw or retain the most qualified talent for specific roles. It is also essential to define routes into leadership and management for people of all genders, not just men.



10. Content Employees

Gender equality makes the whole workforce more content. Any steps an organization takes to equalize the playing field for women equalize it for all genders. It means that men can expect roles that generally go to women if those roles make them comfortable.⁹

11. Better Customer-Targeting

In a regular workplace, women are not included in making decisions concerning product development and marketing. Suppose you get women included at all levels of your organization. In that case, it is easier for you to target this massive section of your customer base efficiently – and quickly. Women have the potential to make your organization much more profitable in the long run.

12. Improved Quality of Life

An organization with flexible work, fair pay, diverse hiring, and continuing to innovate, and develop, leads to a better quality of life for all genders. Men can spend more time with their families and have a more harmonious life. Meanwhile, women may find their participation is prized and feel more satisfied in their working lives. Despite the extensive media attention, enterprises are not making joint progress towards ending the gender pay gap. Although women are frequently exceeding their male equivalents, access to manager positions remains biased towards men. Simultaneously, while some might believe the Millennial generation will subdue this bias, the opposite is true. Organizations can close the gender gap by making equality a decisive objective, just like any other business objective. Business leaders need to build a culture that promotes safe interaction so topics like inequality can be discussed sincerely. Some work needs to be done at a public policy level. At the same time, companies should outline precise actions they can take to make substantial changes. It is time to permanently close the gender gap and tap into the potential the world has been ignoring for centuries.¹⁰

II. DISCUSSION

Working towards a world free of poverty, hunger and environmental degradation, CGIAR's workplaces are multi-cultural, multi-color, multi-disciplinary, and multi-generational. With a workforce of over 10,000 people, representing 136 nationalities and working in 109 countries, our workplaces are full of passionate individuals, each bringing their own skills and perspectives. This diversity powers our innovation. We actively seek to create and sustain workplaces that are inclusive and enabling. We believe that diversity enriches the quality of our decision-making, deepens the relevance of our advice and outputs, and enhances our efficiency and effectiveness. Treating everyone with dignity and fairness is at the core of our values. It's the right thing to do. In January 2020, CGIAR confirmed our commitment to these issues by adopting a Framework and Action Plan for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion (GDI) in our global workplaces. The two documents set out a clear shared vision for GDI and a plan to get us there. The Action Plan contains 22 key objectives, covering five principles: staff diversity, inclusive workplaces, raising awareness and reducing bias, accountability, and partnership. CGIAR's System GDI Function supports the implementation of this Action Plan. It provides expert support, guidance, training and tools in support of achieving our shared GDI vision.¹¹

Diversity is imperative to all workplaces. People with different backgrounds and experiences, who come together as a team, can develop innovative ideas that will keep your company alive and thriving.

- Despite this, companies in many industries and roles are not benefiting from this because they are dominated by a single sex.

For example, tech industry roles are typically filled by men, while nursing roles are typically filled by women. In both cases, the customers are more diverse than the people serving them — which doesn't bode well for understanding their needs.



To better serve your customers, it's important to cultivate gender diversity in the workplace. This goes beyond equal representation of males and females, as it should also include those with a non-binary gender identity.¹²

To Improve Gender Diversity in the Workplace

Build an inclusive workplace.

Before attempting to hire for gender diversity, look within and evaluate your company culture.

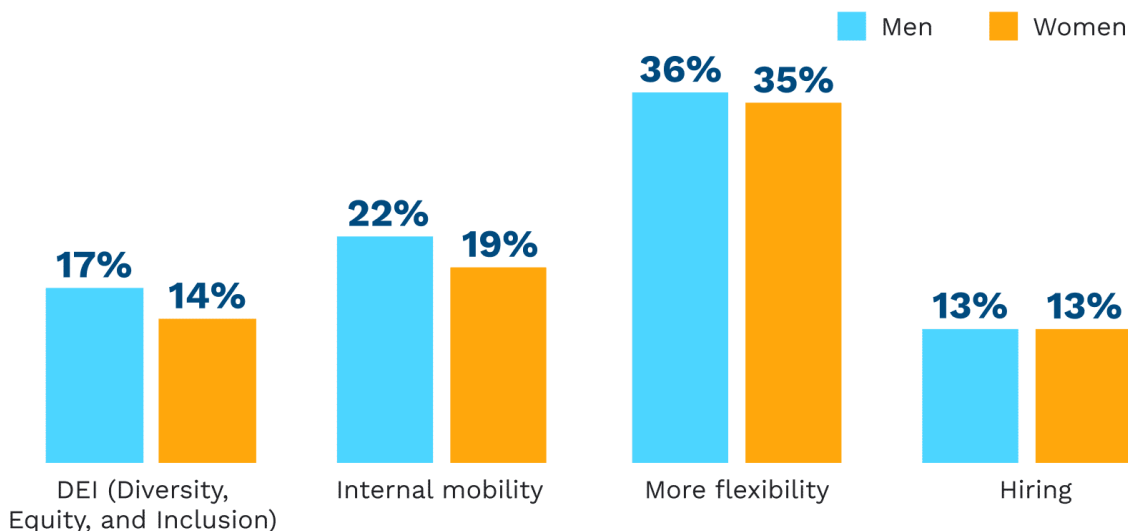
- Is your company a good place to work, regardless of gender?
- Do you treat people across the gender spectrum equally?

Consult your employees to learn how you can build a more inclusive workplace, and put in the work to continually improve your company culture. An inclusive culture will help build your employer brand, so you can attract and retain a diverse workforce. In our Essential Guide to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Lever team shares even more concrete strategies to help you foster inclusion as your first step.¹³

Write better job descriptions.

Improve gender diversity in the workplace by removing gender biases from your job descriptions — before you even speak with a candidate. Men will apply if they are 60% qualified, whereas women will only apply when they are 100% qualified. Rather than writing job descriptions with a list of qualifications, craft performance-based impact job descriptions, which focus on what the person hired would be responsible for accomplishing. Also be careful to avoid gendered language. For instance, champion is masculine-coded, while polite is feminine-coded. Rethinking your job descriptions with these tips in mind can get you one step closer to gender diversity.¹⁴

What employees want their organizations to prioritize in 2022, by gender



Source: Lever, 2022 Great Resignation: The State of Internal Mobility and Employee Retention Report

Proactively source a diverse pipeline.

Rather than waiting around for talent to come to you, proactively source a gender-diverse pipeline. Many sourcing platforms have options to source candidates from underrepresented groups — even if it requires a little creative thinking and extra legwork. For instance, you can build a search string to source qualified candidates who list college sororities or LGBTQ organizations on their profiles. Doing so will allow you to build a diverse pipeline of top-tier talent.

Provide your team with unconscious-bias training.

Unconscious biases exist in all of us, whether we realize it or not. Recognizing them is the first step toward overcoming them in the recruiting and hiring process. Imagine the bias that first impression can carry through the recruitment process. The bias does go both ways, however, as men are often questioned about their interest in jobs dominated by women, such as those in nursing, teaching, or human resources. To overcome these hiring biases, interview teams should learn to recognize them, as well as how to fairly evaluate candidates on a predetermined set of criteria.¹⁵

Set a diverse group of interviewers.

While you're busy evaluating candidates, don't forget that they're evaluating you as well. Roughly two-thirds of candidates said that a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers. Include both men and women, and consider adding in a lunch interview or office tour to introduce the candidate to more



people on your team. With a diverse interview panel, candidates from underrepresented groups will likely feel more comfortable, instead of feeling like the odd one out.

Implement fair compensation practices.

On average, women earn 82 cents for every dollar men earn. Once experience, industry, and job level are factored in, a woman still only earns about 98% of what an equally qualified man with the same job earns. If you want to attract, hire, and retain top-tier talent, you need to compensate them fairly — regardless of gender. A formal employee compensation strategy can help. Utilize data to set compensation bands for each position, and consider each employee's experience, skills, education, and performance to determine where they should fall within that band. Also, explain your compensation offer with each employee, and provide developmental opportunities so each employee knows how they can earn salary increases and promotions. Doing so will make compensation much more strategic, transparent, and fair.¹⁶

Learn from your exit interviews.

Exit interviews are considerably useful, as they can help reveal specific reasons why people are leaving your company, which can help you, in turn, better attract and retain talent. If you're working toward gender diversity in the workplace, you can also dig into your data to understand the differences in why men and women are leaving your organization. This can provide insights that are unique to your company, and allow you to monitor your progress over time. If, for instance, you learn that women are less satisfied with compensation than men, you can take steps to improve your compensation strategy, and see how perceptions change over the course of a year.²⁷

While this is by no means an exhaustive list, these are all things you should consider when working toward gender diversity in the workplace. Let your current employees guide your efforts, as they can provide valuable insights into what your organization is doing well, and where there's room for improvement. Also, consider how gender diverse your company is overall, as well as at the team and seniority level. If you want to build a world-class team, you will want to see gender diversity make progress across the board.¹⁷

III. RESULTS

It's been about 50 years since the mass arrival of women into the corporate workforce and the first equal pay laws were passed, and 20 years since companies designed the first gender diversity plans, but women continue to be largely underrepresented at all workforce levels globally. In virtually every global workforce measure, women have been excluded: Reports suggest that women's participation in the labor force globally has remained stagnant over the last two decades, declining from 57 to 55 percent. The value is much lower in the Middle East and North Africa, with values as low as 25 percent.²⁶

This gender gap is staggering in certain regions, with men nearly three times as likely to have full-time jobs as women. In Latin America and the Caribbean, women are more likely to have temporary and part-time jobs, less likely to be promoted, and are more likely to have jobs with minimal barriers to obtain; such as personal care aides, nursing assistants, and home health aides. Furthermore, the most recent Grant Thornton International Business Report shows that women occupy only 24% of senior management roles globally. In addition, women are less likely to work in stereotypically demanding jobs including engineering, mathematics, and technology. A report by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) revealed that only 4.6% of women work in STEM professions, compared to 10.3% of men, as of 2015. Salary discrepancies based on gender is also a prevalent issue, with women in paid work earning between 10 and 30 percent less than men on the average according to International Labor Organization (ILO) analysis. In the United States, women in full-time employment earn 78 cents for every dollar their male counterparts earn. This gap is much worse in countries of the Middle East and African countries. In present-day labor force, women make up almost half of the population and in more than 40% of families, women are often equal or the main breadwinners compared to their male counterparts. While it is established that women typically acquire more formal educational qualifications than men, they continue to earn considerably less. However,



countries and companies need to begin to look at the issue of gender equality in the workplace differently by creating and implementing a gender diversity policy in the workforce.¹⁸

Workplace Gender Equality Contributes to Development

Gender diversity benefits not only women by improving their spending power and living standards, but it also has a huge impact on an organization's productivity and success. These are some advantages of gender diversity in the workplace:

1. **Widen Talent Pool:** Undoubtedly, different individuals have different talents, skills, and attributes, which they can contribute to an organization's success. Eliminating or reducing female representation in the workforce not only decreases a company's talent pool, but it also reduces the needed collaboration between uniquely skilled men and women to achieve organizational growth.²⁵

2. **Increase Productivity:** With a diverse pool of talents, there is no doubt that an organization will record a significant increase in productivity. A survey conducted by Lehman Brothers revealed that gender-based teams were more likely to be creative, share knowledge, and execute tasks effectively. The report also showed that teams with more women were the most confident.

Companies with gender diversity recruit the best talents, bringing people of diverse skill sets and attributes together to create an environment of creativity and innovation. A major factor contributing to the increased productivity in an inclusive workforce is an increased employee engagement. Equality in the workplace breeds higher job satisfaction, which, in turn, increases employee engagement and performance. Companies with an inclusive workforce also record a fall in the rate of employee turnover, consequent to the increase in employee engagement and opportunity as well as the equality in financial benefits.²⁴

3. **Increase Financial Returns:** Greater employee engagement, performance, and increased productivity that comes with workplace gender diversity results in an increase in financial returns for an organization. A recent study by McKinsey revealed that companies that ranked low for gender diversity were less likely to achieve above average monetary returns compared to more inclusive companies. In the UK, greater gender inclusion on the senior-executive team translated into higher financial performance - Earnings before interest and taxation (EBIT) rose by 3.5% for every 10 percent increase in gender diversity.¹⁹

4. **Social Cohesion -** When jobs become more gender-inclusive, it redefines women's roles in society, creating a sense of social cohesion. In this way, jobs shape people's values and behaviors toward work and women. For instance, greater gender inclusion in the labor force boosts women's rights and agency, expands women's social network, and provides more equitable norms in society.

Strategies to Ignite Gender Equality in the Workplace

Overcoming the issue of gender inequality requires understanding the factors causing it and developing strategies to tackle these constraints at all levels.

Better Recruitment Methods and Work Design

Research has shown that the recruitment and evaluation processes differ for both men and women, as a result of stereotypical expectations of their capabilities and behaviors. This bias often puts women at a disadvantage, as they are subjected to a higher bar. This means women have to earn more qualifications and do more to be judged as competent and qualified as their male counterparts.²³

These kinds of bias have been the basis for gender inequality in the workplace and have reduced women's representation in the workforce. However, some companies have adopted certain approaches to eliminate these biases. These strategies include unconscious bias training and creating more achievement-based criteria for recruitment and unconscious bias training. Bias training uncovers areas where biases may impede the quality of talents and human resources employed and helps managers develop better tools for addressing these



issues. Companies also need to create more recruitment options for women including telecommuting, part-time job options, and flexible hours to keep them included in the workforce across various professional levels while maintaining appropriate financial remunerations. Flexible working enables women to maintain a good work-life balance and still progress in their careers.¹⁵

Equitable Evaluation, Promotion and Payscale

Achievement-based evaluation criteria and bias training are also essential in the workplace. This eliminates the stereotypes about how women should behave and what they need to do to be seen as competent compared to men. Employers should also review their promotion selection criteria, equality-proof them, and ensure transparency and equity. The promotion processes and rates should be routinely monitored and measured to address areas where women are underrepresented. Pay disparity should also be eliminated and employees should be paid fairly and equally based on qualifications, experience, and role, and not on gender. Companies should also make their senior business leaders accountable for ensuring gender inclusion in the workplace.²²

Proactive Strategies via Private Sector Leadership

Private sector jobs represent the majority of the workforce in many countries; accounting for 75% of jobs in France and Egypt, and 90% of jobs in Japan and South Africa. In some of these countries, and with support from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), some of these countries are increasing women's access to jobs by creating more family-friendly work designs. In addition, private and public sector partnerships can help promote women's entrepreneurship by increasing their access to funds, high-quality business and development training, mentoring and coaching opportunities, and to new markets.²¹

Change will not happen overnight, however, as more organizations and business leaders drive the narrative for gender equality and inclusion, it will promote women's agency, create a more effective work environment, and boost every organization's success.¹⁷

IV. CONCLUSIONS

High levels of diversity and inclusion in the workplace are associated with greater productivity, innovation and workforce well-being, yet too little is being done to promote them, particularly among minority groups, meaning that enterprises, workers and societies are missing out on considerable potential benefits.²⁰ Most industry experts agree that creating an inclusive workplace is key to greater diversity and greater success, and this certainly applies to gender equality. In the words of Kristen Anderson, Vice-Chair of European Women on Boards (EWOB), a non-profit Brussels-based organization whose aim is to increase gender diversity in C-Suite and Board roles, "As research has shown, diverse teams perform better than homogeneous teams... but only if they are managed inclusively." To achieve their goals, Anderson and her EWOB colleagues promote the concept of gender equality in organizations as key for their success, but also work with companies to break bias and increase inclusion of women. "Diversity and Inclusion have to work together, like a world-class symphony."¹⁹

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