
IS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN REAL ?

Of all diversity concerns, gender diversity has received most attention and action by organizations everywhere. From “Equal-opportunity” to “Return-at-work” programs, organizations are doing everything to position themselves as preferred employer by men and women equally. Unlike past, women today are not inferior but rather a substantial workforce population. While women are all prepared and organizations too are acting supportive to help them achieve career success, some workplace practices prove the contrary and still go unacknowledged

- Questions on marriage, family and children still remain a deciding factor while hiring a female candidate. Someone single but of marriageable age, someone married by having no kids yet means a prospective resignation or extended leave possibility to hiring managers. Admit it or not but these bias exists and makes it difficult for many women to step into a new job.
- Managers talking about their dislike for female team members for not staying late at work. Seriously, staying late at work is a criteria to judge potential in the era of flexi-work?
- Female employees who return from maternity leave are often exempted from appraisals. All the work done for the year gets compensated with paid maternity leave and a refusal to increment or promotion. Employee benefits like maternity, paternity or family leaves are to help employees manage family and work together but for women, these benefits often have conditions attached.
- Women usually get a second preference when it comes to succession planning. Thoughts like, she might not take the pressure, can't give long term commitment, overseas travel would be difficult for her, rule the decision. We have many evidences in support that, when given a fair chance, women prove their capabilities in top management & leadership roles.

In order to better engage women at work and ensure complete gender diversity and inclusion, the processes and preferences must be alike for everyone. Women are modeled to be more responsible at family and societal level and organization must respect these differences. A truly diverse and inclusive organization provides opportunities for equal participation and growth.