How Are Women Being Treated in the Male-Dominated Work Environment?

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Women have always struggled to achieve their status in life, and they were viewed as second-class citizens who belonged to the house and kitchen. In the last few decades, there has been a transition in the status of women, and there are more women in the labor force than ever. I am studying the status of women in the workplace because I want to find out whether the women who have moved up the ladder with their efforts have improved their situation of being oppressed and vulnerable or not. Because men heavily dominate workplaces, it is essential to understand the status of women in the workplace and how they are being treated in the male-dominated work environment. Workplace adjustment has been difficult for women as they have been competing with men and society at the same time. Also, the educational qualifications of women were not highly regarded. Women were also stereotyped in several jobs that involved hard work and stamina. Women have been discriminated against in the workplace since the time they started being a part of the labor force.

Gender Discrimination In The Hiring Process:

Women have been experiencing bias from the start of the hiring and interviewing process. Gender inequality in assigning roles in the workplace is because of the interactions between the structure of the organization and the preoccupied gender notions. Structural mechanisms in the organization, from the advertisement of the job to the hiring, involve job descriptions, eligibility requirements, and hiring practices that are supposedly gender-neutral (Gorman). For example, with the development of the job description, there is always a line, “we are an equal opportunity employer,” but the hiring process is gender-biased as fewer women are being hired for management and other leading roles. The hiring process impacts men and women differently as employers tend to evaluate candidates through the lens of gender, and gender stereotypes distort the decision-making power of the employers (Gorman). On this basis, an employer might judge the candidate while keeping in mind the perceived roles; for example, a woman might be judged for her apparent indecisive nature during the interaction or interview (Gorman).

The Wage Gap In The Workplace:

Unfair and unequal pay is one of the primary examples of gender discrimination in the workplace (Childs). Even though, because of several movements regarding gender equality, the pay gap might

have been reduced, females are still being paid less compared to men for the same amount of work they perform. Women usually work in lower positions and hardly have the chance to reach management positions or hold a position on a board of directors (Gregory, p. 2). It has been perceived that women cannot work as efficiently as men because of their qualifications and skill learning. This means that regardless of how workaholic or hard-working a woman is, she still has to face several obstacles to progress in her professional life. Her potential is restricted by gender stereotyping and the undermining of her confidence. Because of gender issues, women lack equal chances for promotion and management positions. Even when the performance, dedication, and experience of a woman outweigh the performance, dedication, and qualifications of men, they are not chosen for the positions of managers and supervisors (Gregory; Childs). The Equal Pay Act was introduced in 1963, and it was documented that men and women should be given the same pay for the same amount of work ("Equal Pay Act"). Job titles might be different, but the same job duties and workload should be paid equally, and this includes all types of pay such as salaries, overtime, monthly bonuses, life insurance, holiday packages, and other daily-life indirect costs catered by the company ("Equal Pay Act").

Gender Stereotyping:

Gender stereotyping and organizational factors may lead to gender discrimination. Cultural beliefs play a role in gender discrimination in the workplace and are a primary cause of gender discrimination (Ridgeway and England). Individuals usually translate their cultural ideas and goals, which they have understood from their cultural settings and everyday lives. Regardless of educational status and other qualifications, people tend to categorize based on gender and gender-related stereotypes. The secondary cause of gender discrimination is organizational factors. Gender is a salient feature in organizational systems and structures as institutional decisions are related to promotions, hiring, and transfer of work, as well as assigning tasks (Bobbitt-Zeher). In some cases, employers explicitly put out their thoughts on women being overly emotional, irrational, and unintelligent for a manager-level or administrative-level job. The notion that women are incompatible with specific jobs also reinforces gender discrimination in the workplace. Also, some employers do not hire women and terminate them when they are pregnant because, according to them, that is unattractive for a workplace (Bobbitt-Zeher). People usually imagine a masculine image in powerful seats, and when the job role and gender do not match, gender bias and stereotyping occur (Heilman and Eagly). Gender stereotyping is more common when women work in integrated settings compared to male-dominated or female-dominated workplace settings.

Sexual Harassment At The Workplace:

Sexual harassment is another thing that women face in their workplace, which impacts their career success and job satisfaction. Job dissatisfaction and loss of productivity are some of the most common outcomes of sexual harassment in the workplace (Willness et al.). For example, the victims of sexual

harassment in the workplace would have decreased quality and quantity of work, group work issues, lack of confidence, and increased absenteeism (Willness et al.). The impact of sexual harassment will also negatively impact organizations. The workplace is all about power, which means that less power leads to more vulnerability to mistreatment and general discrimination (Stainback et al.). Usually, in male-dominated organizations, the men in power harass subordinate females with fake promises and other means to attain success. Workplace power has several key dimensions, such as job authority, human capital, and job security, and those who have the highest of these are less likely to be vulnerable and face discrimination of any kind (Stainback et al.). Women are also considered sex objects, and not being in management positions makes them even more vulnerable.

Sociological Theory:

The sociological theory that best suits the topic of women in the workplace is feminism. Feminism is one of the contemporary sociological theories that analyzes and compares the status of men and women in society. The theory focuses explicitly on gender inequality, which has negatively impacted the workplace. The basic principle of feminist theory is that the relationships between men and women have been unequal, and societies have been patriarchal ("Basic Principles of Feminist Theory"). It also theorizes that males have dominated all the major sectors, such as the economy, politics, family, and religion ("Basic Principles of Feminist Theory"). The theory best fits the topic as it aligns with the situation of women in the workplace, where there is discrimination and unequal pay. Also, the workplace has been dominated by men, and women are not able to climb the ladder of success while working. The concept that gender inequality negatively impacts the community and workplace has been a part of women's status in the workplace because women struggle for equality at all levels.

The Concept Of A Glass Ceiling:

The glass ceiling is a metaphor that emerged to explain the existence of this ceiling and other types of discrimination that lead to the underrepresentation of women in the labor force (Barreto et al.). The percentage of women in the labor force has increased over the years, and women have been working hard to break the glass ceiling and lessen workplace discrimination. However, women are not able to climb the ladder of success in their work environment as men heavily dominate managerial or top positions in organizations or companies. The case of women not being able to attain dominant managerial positions is truer in the corporate sector (Barreto et al.) than in any other industry. Research on the glass ceiling has concluded that the success of women in top-level corporate positions is dependent on the company's decision to provide opportunities to women as equally as men (Burke and Mattis). The awareness and struggle of women might have led to an increase in the percentage of women holding powerful positions in the corporate sector, but the percentage is not significant. Women who already hold positions in the corporate world should encourage and design some strategies for young women to help them climb the ladder of success. The number of women

who own a business has increased dramatically in the United States (Nelson and Levesque), which puts women in economic power and managerial positions. Those who own their businesses should encourage a new generation to work up the ladder.

Conclusion:

With the advancement of technology, the roles of women are changing from being limited to the household and taking care of children to being more a part of the labor force around the globe. The paper explores the status of women in the workplace because it is essential to understand how women are being treated in the workplace. Women have been struggling to find their places and equality in the working environment, starting from the hiring process, where women are not given equal opportunities. Once women are hired, they face issues with the wage gap. Even though the difference has been reduced, it is still there, signifying discrimination in the workplace. Women are also being stereotyped and sexually harassed in the workplace because their qualifications and job roles do not align with the perceived notions and cultural beliefs of expected roles. Women have been able to lessen discrimination through their struggles and feminist movements, but the percentage of women who have managerial roles or enjoy equal opportunity is not significant (World Economic Forum, 2024; Pew Research Center, 2023).

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