



Women @ Work: A Global Outlook

Originally published: Deloitte (2021)

Introduction

This report was commissioned by Deloitte Global to understand the impact of the pandemic on gender equality in the workplace. The report includes key insights, recommendations drawn from a survey conducted of 5000 women across 10 countries. These women respondents varied across age groups, races, religions and sexual orientations thus helping in a wholesome and accurate data analysis cutting through a intersectional perspective. This report includes key highlights that shed light on the gaping hole created by the pandemic on gender parity at the workplace such as- women's wellbeing has fallen since the pandemic; women continue to deal with non-inclusive behaviour at work even in the virtual workplace; LGBTQ+ women and women of colour face greater challenges and most women experience increased levels of job dissatisfaction and see no future in their present job scenario. For easier perusal, the report is divided into three chapters and culminates by providing a conclusion along with rehabilitative and action-affirmative actions that organisations can take in bettering this humanitarian crisis.



Key Highlights

1. Respondents have found themselves in a perfect storm: increased responsibility at home, heavier workloads, and damage to relationships with their employers. Added to this, respondents say they have less time for outside interests and have experienced an adverse impact on their relationships with friends and partners.
2. Nearly a third of the 5000 women surveyed fear that being "off" or taking a "break" would impact their career progression in a negative way. An incidence of increased job uncertainty and the culture of "presenteeism" has pushed most women to limits of a personal burn-out.
3. While career optimism is suffering, prejudices seem to be higher for women with colour who feel less optimistic about their job prospects in the overall sample. LGBTQ+ women feel less supported by their employers in helping them achieve a work-life balance
4. Companies may have policies and processes in place, and make statements about their commitment to diversity, but it is a company's "everyday" culture that shows whether these pledges are lived, particularly in periods of extreme disruption such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. Non-inclusive behaviours in form of harassment, unwanted physical contact, unwanted comments about a person's sexual nature, gender identity, caregiving activities have been inflicted upon most women who are part of an organisational framework. Apart from considering these behaviours as non-serious, women fail to report them due to a false impression that it may impact their careers adversely. Needless to say, women of colour and LGBTQ+ women are subjected to heightened non-inclusive behaviours which leads them into resigning from the workforce for good.
6. Gender equality leaders are more supportive and responsive, out of which most of them are from Generation X or Baby Boomers, indicating the role experience plays in achieving gender parity. Research also points that companies with more women at the top have more authentically inclusive cultures. Being a gender equality leader and not a lagging organisation aids in catapulting productivity, mental well-being, job satisfaction, and loyalty to the employer of the workforce manifolds. Lagging organisations, as research shows suffers greater attrition of women as there is an incidence of almost 43% of women leaving their jobs within one year of joining such organisations.

The pandemic exposes a gaping hole in the status of gender equality at the workplace, however it also provides an opportunity to bridge these gaps if affirmative and positive action is taken to rebuild for the better. Some steps include: the creation and maintenance of a culture that is inclusive in every sense, everyday; enabling a work-life balance; an honest and evident commitment of leaders in believing and practicing gender equality in the workplace; aiding a life outside work- providing sabbaticals, better mental health resources, breaks; and, rebuilding a better organisational framework and hierarchy with gender parity at the forefront. Provision of fulfilling opportunities for women at the workplace by tackling the "presenteeism" culture, offering child-care support, providing better benefits, safeguards against non-inclusive behaviour, etc is very pertinent in creating a gender equal workplace.

Read more: [Women @ Work: A Global Outlook](#)

Author: Sarrah Nayar, Intern at Pratham