



Women at Work: Breaking Free of The 'Unentitled Mindset'

Originally published: **The Female Lead** (2021)

Introduction

Throughout history and currently, we see many ongoing issues when it comes to women in the workplace. These issues such as biases, constraints, and other forces have created a gap in today's workplace. Many women continuously struggle with these issues on a day to day basis, leading to gender inequality in the workplace. The Female Lead answers these questions of gender equality, women's career trajectory versus men's, and the positive effects of women in the workplace. Results from a 1994 study done by Terri Apter explain how workplace cultures, specifically men cultures are something that women struggle with. Another result from the study showed how internalised bias started to impede women's progress. These concerns still stand today and will continue if they aren't addressed appropriately. This report provides multiple solutions to tackling the issues women face in the workplace and how we can create an diverse and inclusive workplace for all genders.



Key Highlights

1. One of the key problems in the workplace is bias. An example of overt bias is thinking women are incapable of certain tasks or responsibilities. Moreover, we also see implicit bias which mainly unconscious, and this can be when larger decisions are made affecting morale or career progression for women.
2. Market forces is another key problem for women in the workplace. An example of this can be when an employer may not hire a woman due to her not fulfilling their requirements in terms of time commitment. This issue is seen many times in the mid-career phase as women may have young children they are responsible for. This market force stalls women's career trajectory as they are looked down upon.
3. The study done in 1994 had qualitative data that supports the enablement of women's careers. The five main points of progress were self, society, work, money and relationships. Through ambition, women can begin to enable themselves in areas of self and work by embracing achievements with pride. If women are acting fiercely independent, this can positively help them progress in areas of self and money as financial independence relates to personal power. Lastly, through encouragement from their peers, women can feel more comfortable when applying for jobs or even asking for promotions. These little acts of encouragement and self-confidence will help women in many aspects of their career.
4. Many issues such as biases, macho cultures, and actions are constantly creating barriers for women in the workplace. One of the ways this can be addressed is through coaching for women but as well as for organisations to help drive change. It is also important to make organisations aware of ongoing gender stereotypes that could result in constraint of pay and promotion. "Job Health" clinics could also be a consideration as it could help women assess costs and benefits of continuing to work or possibly start their own business.
5. Data from the 1994 study shows how women were the mainly responsible for taking care of their families during that time period. In today's time, women have outgrown that and their career is a huge part of their identity. In order to grow their careers, women also now start to choose partners who equally put the same effort into taking care of the family.
6. One of the recommendations across dynamic collaboration is to design high-value jobs, for high-value people. This requires a "good job" alongside a "valuable worker" in order for women to progress in their careers. Discussions between managers and employees are needed to design better jobs that allow flexibility but still provide high-value to companies. An innovative job design could help address multiple mental and labour loads going on in homes as well as careers.
7. Another recommendation is to re-focus gender diversity efforts – from myths to the real sticking points. This can be done by job design which was previously mentioned. This would include jobs that offer career development but resist the template of total time worker. The first action to carry out this initiative is to research on pay gap reporting which can help organisations track any inequality issues, and close the gaps. As specific time periods of promotions and pay increases approach, leaders should ask questions about women in the workplace and how they are doing.
8. This is just the start of change that could positively affect women in the workplace. As society progresses with these changes, we can start to see a stronger connection between women and organisations which could lead to more transparency and clarity.

Read more: [Women at Work: Breaking Free of The 'Unentitled Mindset' Report](#)

Author: Jeet Vaghela, PILOT at Pratham