

Introduction

Many organizations pride themselves on having a *diverse workforce*, one that is made up of individuals with a wide range of characteristics and experiences. Some of the key characteristics of workforce diversity include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, ability, and sexual orientation.

Organizations are pushing and publishing to have a comparative gender ratio to promote themselves as supporting **gender diversity**. The approach to make comparative gender ratio as gender diversity leads to **gender discrimination**.

This paper explains some of the myths and poor practices which are used to achieve gender diversity but results into the gender discrimination. Further, it is explained that what should be done to avoid gender discrimination and have a long-lasting growth chart for your organization.

What is gender discrimination?

- ✓ Maintaining male-female ratio in a workforce, for example 30% females, is gender discrimination
- ✓ Publishing gender ratio in annual reports, marketing material or compliance documents is gender discrimination
- ✓ Providing reservation based on gender is gender discrimination
- ✓ Rejecting a candidate based on gender is gender discrimination
- ✓ Using gender information in the selection or sort-listing criteria is gender discrimination
- ✓ Taking any decision based on the person's gender information is gender discrimination

Why are they gender discrimination?

- ✓ To maintain female workforce ratio above a level, for example 30% females, priority may need to give to females over males during the selection, promotion or retention process or vice-versa.
- ✓ Publishing gender ratio in annual reports, marketing or compliance documents means that you believe that different gender has different value to either share-holders, customer or auditors etc.
- ✓ Providing reservation based on the gender means that one gender is weaker than other; thus, they are brought at par by providing reservation.

- ✓ Rejecting a candidate based on the gender is directly a gender discrimination because should the person be of different gender, it would not be a rejection
- ✓ Having gender information in the selection or sort-listing criteria is classic example of gender discrimination where it is upfront used for the decision making
- ✓ Taking any decision based on the person's gender information is a direct gender discrimination.

In fact, talking about gender in corporate world is gender discrimination except in case of actions related to their biological needs.

What should be done?

STOP Talking about gender!!! All the processes used in the organization must be reviewed and remove gender information.

- ✓ Setup guidelines that all genders should be considered equal and no preference should be given to either one.
- ✓ Remove gender information from the application forms that are used to sort-list candidates for hiring.
- ✓ Terminate any reservation based on the gender.
- ✓ Stop publishing gender ratio in any of the periodic report including compliance reports.
- ✓ Stop using gender information in any marketing flyer, advertisements and publications etc, except for gender specific items.

Conclusion

Diversity at the workplace is important to have variety of talents, skills and experiences etc. It manifests itself in building a great reputation, generating innovative ideas and leading to increased profitability.

Under diversification umbrella, gender discrimination is arguably being promoted and widening the gap between male and female workforces. Such gaps are very dangerous for the integrity and longevity for organizations.

Stop talking about gender and remove gender information from most of the documents and processes at workplace. Start considering all genders equal to have the real benefit of diverse workforce.

... next part coming soon.