CHALLENGES OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND PAY INEQUALITY ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICAN WORKPLACES

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Abstract

Women experience various challenges that leads to gender inequality. The patriarchal system in various countries subject women to slavery and undue pressure. Globally, women continue to be subject of inequality and are not treated the same way that other genders would. Religion, culture, norms and customs are some of the elements that contribute to the challenges faced by women throughout the world. The patriarchal system believes in subjecting women to have less rights as compared to the male gender. The purpose of this paper was to address the challenges faced by women in their workplaces on daily basis. It further sought to challenge the perception about women incompetence in performance of their duties. Gender equality will achieve its intended purpose when there is diversity and equal treatment of all genders. The study adopted the qualitative research approach to gain better understanding of the phenomenon within the natural setting. The ecological theory was used as a theoretical framework to understand the gender discrimination, inequality and pay gap. The theory was applied to bring foundation and confirm the findings of the study. The study found that South African workplace is vulnerable for gender discrimination, inequality and pay gap. Transformation of the workplace should be prioritized to be inclusive of all genders. It further highlighted the importance of the implementations of the existing policies.

Keywords: *Challenges, gender, discrimination, inequality and women*

INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of womanhood into the superior levels and businesses in the open and private areas in South Africa continue to be a significant challenge. Women are underutilized in senior level and boards of companies, state owned companies, and this is evident with their relative absence in those institutions (Musetsho, Isac, & Dobrin, 2021). Women become frustrated by lack of considerations for senior position, and this has a serious reflection on the performance of the organizations (Bosch, 2015). It is evidently documented that there is a slow progress of the execution of employment impartiality since its promulgation in 1996 (Mogapaesi, 2019). Black females in the South African workstation have been worsened because of the vulnerability and the disadvantage informed by the exclusion during the apartheid regime (Hersch, 2015). The inequality of black women in the workplace is huge due to the culture, society, stereotypes, and myths around the capability of women in leadership (Buchanan, Ruebottom, & Riaz, 2018).

Gender discrimination in the workplace is increasing in various aspects of employment, which includes variations in wages/salaries, decision making and promotions (Hora, 2014). Despite the progress in the transformative agenda, gender discrimination persists in various workplaces (Shastri, 2014). The discriminatory problems have consistently remained prevalent for females in the workplace (Tiwari & Mathur, 2018). The experiences of women in the workplaces are interestingly different from the experiences of men (Doldor, Sealy & Vinnicombe, 2016).

The manifestation of prejudice against women in the workplace comes in various forms. Workplace equality has not been achieved in many parts of the world and has created fundamental health problems (Schmader & Sedikides, 2017). The gendered discrimination provides significant challenges to the wellbeing of women in the workplace. Females get affected by various social, emotional, and psychological challenges (Sealy & Ryan, 2019). Despite the growing number of women in the workplace, myths, stereotypes, and discrimination continues dominating the workplace and affect women and their welfare (Shastri, 2014). Females has large contribution in economic and crucial sectors to lead the nation (Verma, Srivastva, Sharma, Mishra, Gupta, Anisha & Dwivedi, 2022).

Even with legislation protecting women's security and safety at work, women still confront numerous obstacles in the workplace. Even so, many women experience less severe outcomes (Shikha & Yuvika, 2014). Despite

obstacles that prevent them and contribute to gender disparity in the job, women now have sufficient power to demonstrate their effectiveness both within and outside the house. Human existence cannot exist without work since it generates lucrative living conditions, enjoyment, and contentment. In addition to other professions, women flourish in space exploration and rocket science (Patel & Dutta, 2017). Women are just as important to the nation's economic prosperity as men are, and their contributions are substantial.

According to Robin and Padavic (2020), Women at their level are equally likely as males to wish to advance and aspire to senior-level positions. They encounter microaggressions in many workplaces, though, which weaken their authority and indicate that it will be more difficult for them to progress. For instance, ladies are considerably more likely than male leaders to have colleagues cast doubt on their judgment or make derogatory remarks about their suitability for their positions. Women executives are also more likely to admit that personal traits like being a parent or their gender have contributed to their being turned down for opportunities for promotion or receive a raise.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Republic of South Africa is hardly an exception when it comes to workplace discrimination against women. To guarantee the advancement, defence, and fair distribution of opportunities for all genders, the Commission on Gender Equality Act was created (Commission for Gender Equality, 1996). Strategic strategies and policies of the government have made it a priority to increase the number of women in high positions in business and government. According to Growing Gauteng Together (2019), the Department of Labour has set a goal for the proportion of women in senior management positions and in businesses. Women still experience low pay and barriers to advancement in the workplace. There are sufficient policies in place in South Africa to address the issues of gender disparity in the workplace. The nation's reputation suffers because of these measures continued non-implementation (World Bank, 2021). South Africa is considered one of the most unequal countries in the world and the workplace discrimination continues to grow.

South Africa has contrasting reports about the gender discrimination, inequality and gender pay gap status. The South African Department of Labour reports the decline in gender pay gap suggesting that it dropped from 41% to 21% from the year 1995 to 2005 (Adelekan and Bussin, 2018). Contrary to these reports, Kahn and Motsoeneng (2014), report the pay disparities to be at 27% in the public sector and 35% in the private sector. Bussin and Nienaber (2015) highlight the pay gap to be at 15% between men and women. Although there is contrasting reports about gender pay gap, it remains a significant concern to the South African Labour market. Steyn and Jackson (2015) allude that there are no significant differences in the gender pay gap between men and women in the South African Labour market.

According to the Women in the Workplace report (Haile, Emmanuel, & Dzator, 2016), 35% of women with full-time work in the business sector had experienced sexual harassment. According to an additional EEOC research, 75% of women who experience harassment of this kind do not report it, particularly when the abuser holds a high position (McMahon & McMahon, 2016). "Why did the victim not report?" is a common question. The principal cause of this is the fear of losing one's job. According to the same EEOC study, "75% of harassment victims experienced retaliation when they reported it." Regardless of their achievements and merits, several impediments keep women from rising to the highest echelons of organizations (Grant Thornton - IBR, 2012).

Mouton, Louw, and Strydom (2013), claim that the government is still working to address the effects of the past while weighing the potential and risks for the future, which is why the South African education system is still undergoing change. There should be equal opportunity and risk. According to Von Holdt (2013), although South Africa has had democracy for 29 years, the nation still has a way to go in terms of addressing historical injustices and prejudice. The economic sector is one where gender disparities are most evident (Campos-Serna, Ronda Perez, Artazcoz, Moen & Benavides, 2013). In South Africa, women have made significant strides in various professional fields, breaking barriers and achieving notable success (Moodley, 2018). However, they still encounter a range of unique challenges that hinder their progress and limit their opportunities for advancement.

Theoretical Framework

The researchers in this paper has adopted the Ecological approach as the theoretical framework that will provide basis and background to the study. It is the approach that is frequently applied when dealing with difficult situations and environment such as the workplace challenges (Pawar, 2014). The person-in-environment is the center of this theory and the influence that people have and their interaction with the environment. It focusses on the importance of the environment and workplace environment as well as challenges (Zastrows, 2013). Women mix with other women within the workplace environment and the engagements may lead to discrimination in the workplace. The environmental factors within the workplace have a fundamental effect on the inequality experienced by women

(Payne, 2014). It is fundamentally inevitable that women will interact with other women and other people within the workplace. Workplace inequality has a particular place where it takes place. The workplace environment may require the installation of CCTV cameras for proper management of discrimination (Zastrows, 2013).

METHOD
A qualitative approach was adopted on the basis that it has the potential to provide understanding and description of the challenges experienced by women in their respective workplace in South Africa. Qualitative research technique was used because statistical methods or the application of numbers could not be used to infer the emerging findings from the participants' actual experiences, behaviours, emotions, and sentiments (Rahman, 2016). The data presented in the study derived from women who are employed within South African different workplaces (employers). The population of the consisted of women who are employed and out the population, using purposive sampling technique, 5 women were chosen to be part of the study. This approach was helpful for the study in qualitative research since it enabled the researchers to concentrate on specific women who have special knowledge or firsthand experience with facing challenges and discrimination in the workplace (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Purposive sampling is significant because it can guarantee that the sample is representative of the intended audience, adding a range of viewpoints to the data (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015).

An exploratory research design was employed in this study on the basis that exploratory study design is a useful methodological technique that helps shed light on intricate yet poorly understood phenomena (Cresswell, 2014). This methodology, which is marked by flexible and open-ended questions, permitted the researchers to explore subjects without predetermined hypotheses, allowing the researcher to find novel patterns and factors. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were held with the five working women.

According to Busetto, Wick and Gumbinger (2020), semi-structured interviews are a useful technique for gathering qualitative, open-ended data and examining participants' attitudes, feelings, and ideas regarding a specific subject. The collected data was analysed thematically, as the analysis of thematic data is important because it enables researchers to derive significant conclusions from qualitative data, simplifying difficult problems (Cresswell, 2014). It highlights the diversity of experiences shared by individuals and can shed light on underlying social norms, procedures, and beliefs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
This study investigated the challenges of gender discrimination and pay inequality that is encountered by women in their workplaces in South Africa. Gender discrimination and pay inequality continue to be major obstacles to women's economic empowerment and workplace justice in South Africa. Notwithstanding legal frameworks designed to advance equality, women nevertheless confront several obstacles that affect their ability to pursue careers and economic prospects. According to the guidelines for qualitative research, quotations are utilized to appropriately convey the opinions of the participants (Marvasti, 2014). The following findings emerged from the data of the study.

- Gender inequality
- Gender pays gap/Unequal distribution of funds
- Workplace harassment for women
- Well-being of women in the workplace
- Mental health of women who experiences inequality and discrimination in workplace.
- Workplace bullying

Discussion
The section is based on discussing the themes that emerged from the findings of the study.
Theme 1: Gender inequality
The study revealed that indeed there is a gender inequality in the workplace, female employees are still sidelined for the benefits that the male counterpart is receiving in the workplace. It further revealed that women feel that their voices are not heard simply because they are females unlike the other gender that they are working with in the very same work and same job description. Most women in the workplace they put more effort, but they feel that they are not recognized, this made one of the participants to mention that she feels annoyed by how things unfold in the workplace. The study showed that it is very difficult for the involved women to speak up as they will feel undermined and not be taken into consideration. Gender inequality comes because of being ignored and treated with same energy and dignity with the other gender within the workplace.

"In meetings, I frequently feel like I have to yell in order to be heard. Sometimes my ideas are welcomed with quiet, but later on, my male colleagues agree. It annoys me, especially because I know that my efforts could advance our initiatives. Assertiveness is valued in this culture, but I wish there was more space for cooperation and appreciation of different viewpoints". Participant C

"It's difficult for me to speak up as a young woman in engineering. During conversations, I frequently feel ignored and that my opinions are not respected. I long for guidance, but the few women in leadership positions are already overworked. I enjoy what I do, but there are moments when I question whether I'll ever be able to progress in this setting". Participant E

Women are still disproportionately underrepresented in leadership roles and frequently face the "glass ceiling." This metaphor highlights the imperceptible obstacles that keep women from advancing to senior executive positions even when they meet the requirements and have the necessary experience (Kleven, Landais, & Søgaard, 2019). Literature that has been conducted and published in journals such as "Gender, Work & Organization" highlight how unconscious biases and organizational culture contribute to the continuation of these disparities (Carlsen, 2020). In addition to having trouble getting into high-level jobs, women in leadership frequently run across doubts about their capacity to lead, which makes it harder for them to advance. Organizational structures, procedures, and practices all exhibit gender disparity, which is a complicated phenomenon (Stemarksi & Son Hing, 2015). Some of the most detrimental gender disparities that affect women are implemented through human resources (HR) procedures. Because of the various gender inequality that exists, the workplace has occasionally been described as an unwelcoming environment for women (Schaufeli, Salanova & M.A.R.I.S.A., 2013).

Theme 2: Gender pays gap/Unequal distribution of funds

Men and women generally have similar professions and responsibilities in workplace, with historically male-dominated industries (such as engineering and finance) paying more than traditionally female-dominated industries. The study revealed that there is still gender gap between the female and males who are executing the same job. This sets discouragement in the lives of the women who eagerly wants to grow in their profession. The study found that despite workplace experience, women are still getting less pay/salary than their male colleagues who have less experience as compared to them. Women in the workplace strive to also do extra duties in the workplace but their efforts are not recognized as they are getting less pay than the male counterpart. This was shown by the following participants.

"I was eager to begin my career as a junior engineer, but I soon discovered that the pay gap between women and men in my position is substantial. Knowing that my contributions to projects do not show up in my compensation is depressing. Although the pay difference makes me feel like I'm always having to prove myself, it also erodes my confidence." Participant E

"Despite the fact that I have worked for my agency for more than ten years, I have discovered that my male colleagues who have comparable experience make a lot more money. I find it really depressing." Participant B

Participant D agreed with participant B.

"I frequently take on additional duties, yet their contributions seem to disappear when it comes to pay reviews. My displeasure is exacerbated by the pay systems' lack of transparency." Participant D

The literature concurs with the research findings, one major and enduring problem in the workplace is the gender wage gap (Meara, Pastore, & Webster, 2020). Previous research regularly demonstrate that women are paid less for comparable jobs than males are; this discrepancy is ascribed to several variables, such as discrimination, occupational segregation, and inequalities in work experience (Olsen, Gash, Sook, & Zhang, 2018). Furthermore, it shows that there is still a significant salary disparity even after adjusting for factors like job type and education (Blau, & Kahn, 2020). These disparities between nations are highlighted in the World Economic Forum's annual Global Gender Gap Report, which emphasizes the need for focused programs and laws to support fair compensation practices.

Furthermore, the gender pay gap is defined as the variation in the mean salary of males and females in the labour force. Paying someone differently for doing the same or similar work just because they are men or women is illegal (Auspurg, Hinz & Sauer, 2017). Although there is no single gender pay gap or racial pay gap because women from different backgrounds have very varied experiences and incomes, the overall gender pay gap is helpful for understanding the impact of gender on women's pay (Mandel & Semyonov, 2014). Nonetheless, women who work full-time are usually paid less than men in the same group across all racial and cultural groupings (Miller & Vagins, 2018).

Theme 3: Harassment of women in Workplace

Findings of the study reveals that workplace harassment is a widespread problem that impacts women in a range of professions and sectors. It includes a variety of improper actions, such as unwelcome advances, verbal mistreatment, and gender-based discrimination. Such harassment not only diminishes the self-worth of those it targets, but it also poisons the workplace, which can have a negative effect on output and job satisfaction in general. Women experience derogatory comments, belittling remarks, or threats from colleagues and supervisors. The study shows that this type of harassment creates a hostile work environment and diminishes a woman's confidence and sense of belonging. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other sexually suggestive physical behaviour are directed towards women in the workplace as the study reveals. According to the study, it can manifest itself in both overt and covert ways, such as unwanted touching or remarks or provocative emails or jokes.

"During team meetings in particular, male coworkers have made offensive remarks that have made me feel uneasy. It annoys me since I frequently get told I'm exaggerating or ignored when I try to speak up. The toxic atmosphere created by this abuse undermines my confidence and makes me wonder if I actually belong here". Participant B

"I see harassment at my banking institution being dismissed a lot. When I protested offensive remarks made by male coworkers, I was urged to "toughen up." Seeing that the business doesn't take these problems seriously is disheartening. This type of atmosphere not only has an impact on women, but it also works against a respectful culture for all". Participant C

"I've worked with people who believe their words have no restrictions. They try to physical touch me and request sexual activities; some people have said offensive things that have gone too far. Even though I want to remain professional, I feel exposed because of these events. I've need to get better at standing up for myself, but dealing with this disrespect all the time is tiring." Participant A

Women are subjected to harassment at work because of their gender. Physical, emotional, and psychological harassment of women at work are all forms of workplace harassment (Wijedasa, 2015). Women are made and considered to be responsible for their harassments in the masculine overshadowed workplaces. However, this contributes to why women are not reporting the harassment they endure at the hands of men (Sakha & Shah, 2019). Women are inciting men into harassment. There is a perception that harassment only happen to women with bad behaviour or unmannered women. Most women give up their jobs to save themselves from humiliation when reporting harassment (Wijedasa, 2015). Bullying in the workplace is some of the harassments that women are subjected to in their place of work. The discrimination based on gender of women is the root of women harassment in the workplace (Safa & Akter, 2015). Socially and sex subordination, women are considered inferior to their male counterpart in many parts of the world. The social inequalities and social classes impact negatively in the workplace life of the women (Chaudhary & Verick, 2014). Society expects women to be subordinates towards men in all levels, this has been escalated to the workplace where cultural and societal perceptions are discriminating against women (Sakha & Shah, 2019).

Theme 4: Well-being of women in the workplace

Women's well-being in the workplace is frequently jeopardized by several issues, such as salary disparity, gender discrimination, and a dearth of encouraging situations. The findings of the research demonstrated that many women reports experiencing significant levels of stress as a result of discrimination at work and the pressure to succeed in settings where men predominate. Anxiety and exhaustion can result from this constant tension. It also shows that women in underrepresented roles frequently experience feelings of isolation and a lack of support from one another, which can improve job happiness. Additionally, research reveals that women face obstacles to advancement, which can hinder their professional and career advancement. This sense of being stuck can cause irritation and lower job satisfaction.

"My workplace's poisonous atmosphere frequently jeopardizes my wellbeing. I see firsthand how gender discrimination lowers colleagues' morale in addition to my own. We frequently encounter apathy when we voice our concerns. It is tiresome when it seems like our voices are unheard. I long for a nurturing atmosphere where women are respected and given voice". Participant D

"Gender discrimination at work is a persistent threat to my well-being. I often have the urge to perform above expectations in order to appear competent". Participant C

"Frequently, I feel alone. My sense of wellbeing and belonging is impacted by my coworkers' lack of support. Even though I'm ready to learn and develop, the subtle discrimination I encounter makes me question if I

belong here. To support the success of women like me, I wish there were more mentorship programs".
Participant A

The findings of the study concur with the literature which says, in the workplace, women are consistently subjected to excessive pressure, stress, trauma, and sadness (Qian, & Fan, 2019). The low wellbeing of employees at work is a result of stress, burnout, and subpar performance (Brown & Moloney, 2019). This has an impact on employees' well-being and interferes with women's social functioning at work. Women face serious mental health issues as a result of their employment situations. These difficulties put women at risk for subpar work, a work-life balance, and the effects of job satisfaction (Babic & Hansez, 2021). Women's experiences in the workplace, discrimination, and family obligations cause a lot of stress, which lowers employee morale and wellness. According to Kim, Henly, Golden, and Lambert, (2020), the health and well-being of individual employees are significantly impacted by workplace discrimination and discrimination against women in the workplace persists due to a few factors, including societal expectations, stereotypes and cultural considerations. Women are struggling with wellness and wellbeing in the workplace because of the stresses they experience daily.

Theme 5: Mental health of women who experiences inequality and discrimination in the workplace

The findings shows that women facing inequality and discrimination in the workplace often experience significant mental health challenges and the impact of these negative experiences manifest in various ways, affecting emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life of women. Chronic stress results from discrimination against women's constant urge to show their value. This strain causes anxiety to spike, which makes it challenging to concentrate on work or give your best effort. The study further reveals that women's stress levels are increasing in the workplace by worries about speaking out against unjust treatment. Moreover, women always feel insecure because they are afraid of losing their jobs or being discriminated against more in their respective workplace. The study shows that Negative signals about women's skills are internalized by them because of discrimination and unfair treatment, which lowers their self-esteem and makes them feel inadequate. For example, participant A and E shows how their mental health is at stake in their workplace.

"Every day feels like a struggle, and I'm always concerned about how my male coworkers will see me and whether they'll value what I have to say. It's exhausting to attempt to prove myself, and sometimes I feel exhausted when I go home. This disrupts my sleep and attitude, making it difficult for me to concentrate on my work". Participant A

"My mental health has suffered as a result of being one of the few women in a field that is predominately male; I frequently feel alone and nervous, and I doubt my ability. I find it difficult to enjoy my profession when I feel like I'm always struggling for respect and attention due to the persistent subtle discrimination". Participant E

The working population is increasingly fearful of mental health issues, which could have an impact on social welfare, workplace (LaMontagne, Martin, Page, Reavley, Noblet, Milner, Keegel & Smith 2014). Clinical (major depressive illness, anxiety disorders, etc.) and sub-clinical mental health issues are highly prevalent in working populations. Research indicates that there are serious negative impacts on the mental health of women who face discrimination and inequality at work (Velez, Cox Jr, Polihronakis, & Moradi, 2018). Stress, anxiety, and depression are frequently reported by women who experience gender bias, pay disparities, and harassment; these difficulties are made worse for women from marginalized backgrounds because of intersectionality (Han, Mortimer, & VanHeuvelen, 2023). Microaggressions and other subtle kinds of prejudice can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and low self-worth. According to Harnois and Bastos (2018), as coping strategies, some women turn to activism or social support, but others internalize their experiences, which can result in long-term mental health problems.

Positive mental health is not the absence of mental disorders; rather, it is the presence of specific mental goods, such as certain mental skills, habits, and capacities. Having positive mental health may depend on several factors, such as your ability to focus, maintain positive relationships with others, and find joy in life's little pleasures, as well as your level of emotional stability and calmness (Kellers, 2020). A person who experiences well-being "realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community," according to the World Health Organization. Positive mental health is defined as well-being.

Theme 6: Female Workplace bullying

The study found that bullying at work has a serious negative impact on mental health, increasing the risk of anxiety, depression, and low job satisfaction. The study went forth and revealed that the most prevalent type of bullying that women are coming across in the workplace is verbal bullying. Verbal bulling in workplace includes disparaging remarks, taunts, or rumours that make a woman feel less competent and confident. The findings of the study shows that Verbal bullying in the workplace women lives is a serious problem that take many negative forms, including gossip, public humiliation, and offensive remarks and further that these actions cause serious mental health effects, such as anxiety and depression, in addition to undermining a person's self-esteem. Women in the workplace are undermined, and their views are undermined since they are women. The study findings reveals that these women in the workplace they are trying to avoid this bullying and being undermined by colleagues, but it is not coming to stop. As a result of bullying, women in the workplace do not see a need to go to their workplace because of their senior male colleagues who continually makes disparaging remarks about their work and in front of other colleagues.

"As a woman, I've seen firsthand the subtle bullying that frequently goes unnoticed. My coworkers undercut my views in meetings and blow off my suggestions just because I'm a woman. It wears me out and makes me feel like I have to prove myself more than my male colleagues, which is bad for my confidence and mental well-being". Participant E

"I often dread going to work because of the stress caused by a senior colleague who continually makes disparaging remarks about my work, even in front of others. It feels like a never-ending struggle to establish myself". Participant A

"Bullying has happened to me, not only from coworkers but also occasionally from bosses. It's typically disguised as "tough love" or "feedback," but it's actually demeaning. It's emotionally taxing, but over the years I've had to grow a thick skin. It is imperative that women in leadership roles share their stories in order to encourage change". Participant C

"I've grown more self-assured in my ability to speak up, but as a woman attempting to support her family and look after her kids, I still feel the negative effects of bullying from my male coworkers on my mental health and how I tackle new tasks at work". Participant D

Literature concurs with the findings of the study, one major problem that affects women in the workplace is verbal bullying, which takes the form of hostile communication like gossip, public humiliation, and insulting comments (Maidaniuc-Chirilă, 2019). Literature shows that such actions have detrimental effects on one's mental health, including anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem. The culture of the workplace is a major factor in the incidence of verbal bullying; hostile and competitive work conditions frequently make these problems worse (Zheng, Nauman, & Jahangir, 2024). Additionally, intersectionality might have compounding impacts for women from underprivileged backgrounds, which emphasizes the necessity for customized treatments (Salin, 2021).

The term "workplace bullying," also known as "worker harassment," refers to circumstances in which an employee feels mistreated and abused by other members of the company on a long-term basis (Einarsen, Lieberman & Williams, 2011). But with time, these behaviours will become extremely unsettling and distressing for the people who are exposed to them (Shaka & Shah, 2019). There is few research on the long-term associations between experiencing bullying at work and mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression symptoms, and those that do exist primarily focus on intermediate time lags of 1-2 years (Nielsen & Einarsen 2012a).

Recommendations

- Transformation and inclusion of women in senior leadership is important.
- Employee health and wellness services are important to assist with mental health problems and other effects of women in the workplace.
- Educating the public about how women are viewed in the workplace and in the corporate world.
- Once or twice a year the employer should conduct a special training to employees regarding the harassment of women, Workplace bullying, women in the workforce, and the consequences of discrimination.
- Employers consider recruiting social workers as employee health and well officers to address the inequality, discrimination and challenges.
- Prevention of workplace violence, aggression directed at women to have inclusivity.

- Offer orientation or induction programs for new employees, along with "booster shots" to make sure harassment is acknowledged and dealt with.
- women should equitably be considered to get same pay with other genders for the same work performed.
- Social justice in the workplace is important to address the disparities experienced by workers in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

The issues and difficulties faced by working women are numerous and complex. The study looked at the difficulties that women encounter in their fields of employment. These difficulties include challenges like sexual harassment, discrimination, inequity, and gender pay disparities. These key ideas have been defined in a variety of ways by numerous writers. The challenges that they face are directly social problems that can require an intervention from occupational social worker/EAP. There is indeed a need for intervention because these challenges can hinder the productiveness of female workers that can later taint their image from both co-workers and the employer.

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