

Gender Equity and inclusive growth Survey

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Authors Note

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Abstract

“An important query the Policy Centre & Gender lab had pertained to the role of career breaks taken by women, mostly during the months of pregnancy and post-childbirth, in justifying the lower wages paid to women compared to men doing the same job. An overwhelming majority of 97% reaffirmed that it is erroneous to assume that career breaks taken by women can be used as a tool to underrate the value of work done by them. Hence, it is the need of the hour to achieve gender equity for inclusive growth.”

Gender Equity and inclusive growth Survey

Policy Centre & Gender Lab conducted a survey on the issue of Gender Equity Awareness among society and its members. The day aimed to understand the level of awareness of persistent inequality existing in society. The objective of the survey is to showcase the arenas of education and awareness programs where work can still be done.

Method

Google forms were used for the creation and circulation of the survey.

The survey link: <https://bit.ly/39Y2d8X>

Participants

The participants are categorized into three categories based on their age group. These are as follows:

1. Below the age of 18
2. Between the age of 18 and 25
3. Above the age of 25

Assessments and Measures

1. To authenticate the responses received, the email of all the respondents were recorded.
2. To avoid multiplicity of data, extensive rechecking was done.
3. The outcomes have been cross-checked by multiple people and multiple times.
4. To minimize copying of responses, the responses were not shared with the other participants immediately.

Policy Center and Gender Lab

Policy Center and Gender Lab began its arduous task of equipping the students with promising research skills on 4th February 2020. We have also taken a keen interest in keeping the young researchers up to date with the current political scenario and encourage them to develop perspectives that can open up new dimensions. Policy Centre & Gender Lab is to provide education and training in research and related skills, especially for undergraduate students and young scholars, thereby assisting flowering learners to explore the arenas of academia and the power of knowledge. No social structure is exempt from the penetration of gender dimensions which serve as an excellent lens for scrutinizing society, public policies serve as a course of action that guides a range of related actions in a given field. They rarely tackle one problem, but rather deal with clusters of entangled and long-term problems. An optimal rational and development-oriented public policy is the need of the hour and the centre shall serve as a creative space where students, faculty and other stakeholders can develop the knowledge and skills to develop policy in a more open, discussion-oriented, and research based data-driven, digital and user-centred way with implications for society. To conclude, Policy Centre and Gender Lab is the first attempt of its kind in the University to engage with our students- young women who are leaders in their own right to discover, design and evaluate public policies. Through the Lab, Miranda House shall be giving it's students roots to stay strong and wings to fly on.

Purpose of the Survey

Gender inequality refers to the idea that men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual's living experience. Conventional and unconventional forms of this inequality have been existing in society for a long time now. And we have successfully and subconsciously overlooked them. Policy Centre and Gender Lab, Miranda House conducted this survey as an initiative to understand how deep has this pay gap entrenched in our society and minds. With this, we aim to develop an understanding about the awareness among the masses and will help us to further work on our objectives as a team in a positive, better and equal way forward.

Responses and Observations

Harsh realities enmeshed with the way of life tend to be overlooked. But no amount of deliberate disregards can alter the unfaltering truth. The blatant truth of gender inequality was once again thrust upon us with the results of the survey. An important query the Policy Centre and Gender lab had pertained to the role of career breaks taken by women, mostly during the months of pregnancy and post-childbirth, in justifying the lower wages paid to women compared to men doing the same job. It is erroneous to assume that career breaks taken by women can be used as a tool to underrate the value of work done by them. The field of sports, politics, defence forces, entertainment industry and journalism, private sector, informal work space, educational institutions especially fields of science and research, nursing, entrepreneurship, religious rituals, agriculture and homes were the most popular spaces listed by participants where men and women are meted out with unequal treatment.

The views expressed by the respondents regarding the position of women in workplaces and educational institutions and their financial security encompassed very pertinent observations. Women are challenged at every step in their process of empowerment. From the refusal to grant them the authority to reign their life due to the social perception that women are incapable of decision making and require the permission of men to choose their career, women often find themselves subordinate to their male counterparts at the workplace. Women have to work twice as hard to prove their worth and even then, their recruitment is often frowned upon due to the possibility of career breaks they are bound to take. This is highlighted by how interviews of women always feature questions of the kind, 'How soon will you get married? Do you have kids? If yes, then will it not affect your work here?' Many institutions do not prefer married women as employees justifying it by assuming that women won't be able to contribute as men owing to their attention being divided by household chores. This reinforces the public-private divide based on gender. Security of women at the workplace is another issue of contention.

The threat of sexual harassment, unsafe nighttime commutation, strictly regulated dress codes and moral policing, the prospect of losing jobs if they raise voice against misogynist bosses or if they refuse the sexual favours demanded from them by male colleagues or seniors and lack of support from family or in-laws can physically and psychologically exhaust women, often forcing them to leave their jobs and give in to patriarchy and judgmental society. The intersectionality within the channels of discrimination faced by women should not be ignored. As pointed out by a participant in the survey, "When we talk about the representation of women in public spaces it is also equally important to look at where these women come from."

Most of the public institutions are filled with savarna women. The representation that women from marginalized communities get is less than adequate. Upper caste or upper-class women cannot speak for the lived experiences of women from marginalized communities, making it mandatory to use the perspectives offered by intersectionality while analyzing gender discrimination. The survey also brought to notice various measures

that must be adopted to ensure women have the same opportunities to utilize their potential as men. Workplaces and institutions must be gender sensitized with institutional mechanisms in place for ensuring equality and addressing grievances. The informal sector and private sector must be equally covered under this mandate.

At the workplace, women should not be discriminated against based on the number of hours they are putting in because they can have certain biological issues at times or household work that might take up their time. The only criteria for their remuneration should be the quality of work they are putting in. Disregard for exploitative gender norms must be inculcated, for instance, by normalizing the sharing of household chores between men and women. Initiatives must be taken to spread legal awareness among women, especially those residing in rural areas and are vulnerable to ill-treatment.

Asking the right questions may not always lead to right answers but shall provide new questions to ponder upon. The survey conducted by Policy Centre and Gender Lab on the theme of Women Equality once again proved to us, why we still have a long way to go in ensuring that women wake up to a day when they are no longer constrained by preconceived notions of society on where and how they should be. A day when equality shall be the norm, mutual respect shall be the rule and individual merit shall be the criteria.

Results

Outcome 1

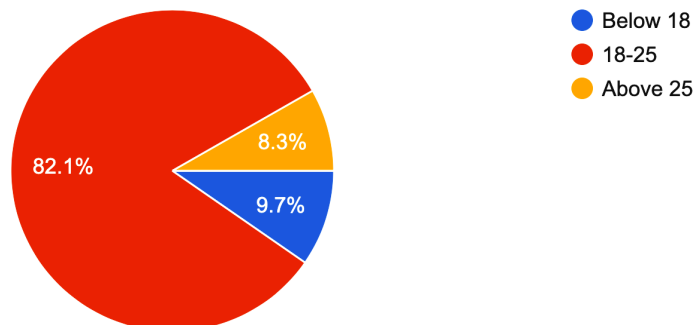
The first part of the survey dealt with understanding the background of the respondents including questions about the field of study/work and basic questions about awareness and laws. The observations were as follows:

1. 133 out of 145 respondents were female, giving the survey a feminine bias.
2. Around 82% of the participants were in the age group of the second category, i.e. 18 to 25 years of age. About 10% of them aged below 18 years while approximately 8% aged above 25 years.

Gender Equity and inclusive growth Survey

Age

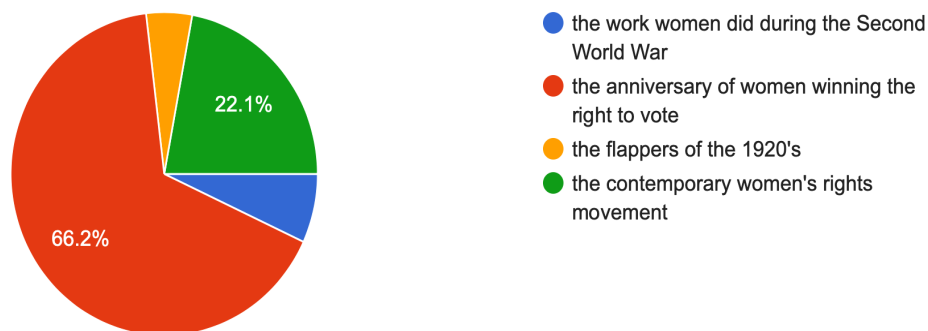
145 responses



3. The number of students outnumbered the number of working professionals. Where 83% of participants were students in the survey, the participation of working professionals was around 8%.
4. Around 6% of the participants marked themselves to be unaware of gender biases and inequality. The percentage of those who were aware was around 15%. Those who were diligent enough to be aware of the inequalities and possibly experienced them was about 80%.
5. Checking the general awareness of the respondents, a question about the purpose of celebration of Women's Equality Day. Only 66% answered correctly.

August 26th is celebrated as Women's Equality Day to commemorate

145 responses

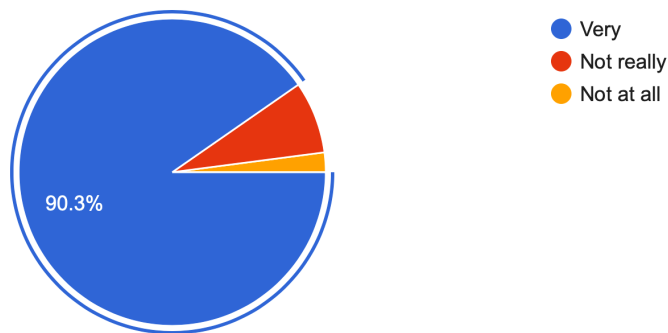


6. Vague answers were provided when the respondents were asked about their knowledge of laws and policies in existence as an initiative by the Government of India to ensure gender equality in the nation.

7. Financial independence was deemed to be a requisite for ensuring equality in society by around 90% of the participants. Around 8% responded negatively that financial stability holds any value in the implementation of the concept of gender equality. About 2% of the responses were totally against the notion of financial independence leading to gender equality.

How necessary do you think financial independence is, in bridging gender gap?

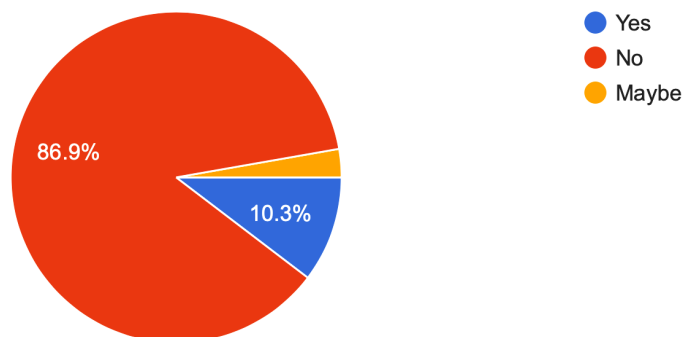
145 responses



8. 126 out of 145 responses conformed to the societal notion that studying and working are not mandatory just because of belonging to a particular sex. 15 of the respondents were unsure and 8 of the responses did not conform to the notion.

Do you conform to the societal notion that studying and working is not mandatory just because of belonging to a particular sex?

145 responses

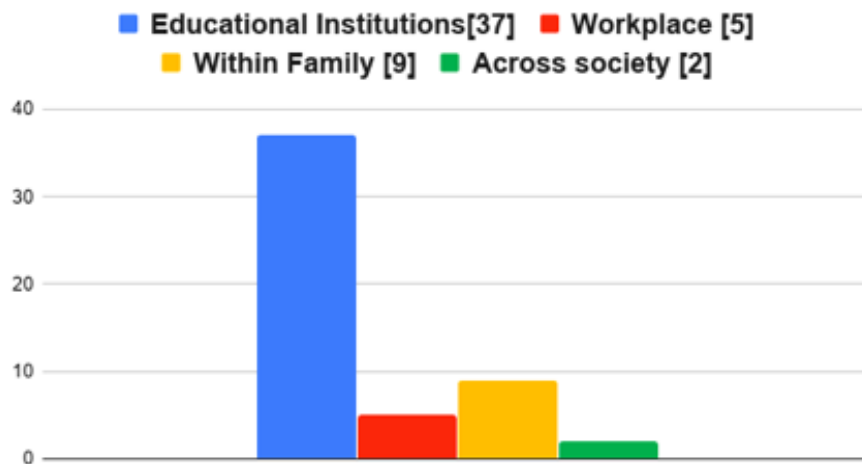


Outcome 2

The second part of the survey focused on gathering deeper insights from the respondents to understand their idea of equality through their experiences and experiences they have heard about. The results were as follows:

1. 101 out of 145 respondents stated experienced gender inequality or gender discrimination.
2. 79% of the 53 individuals who responded to the query about where they had to confront gender discrimination pointed out educational institutions and workplaces, 16% were prejudiced against by their family members and relatives while the rest mentioned unjust treatment based on gender as an evil pervasive and entrenched in our society as a whole.

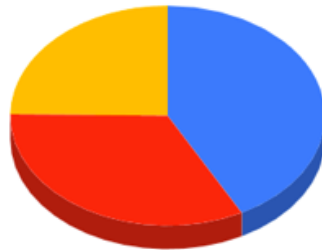
Spaces where Gender Discrimination was experienced



3. An overwhelming majority of 97% reaffirmed that it is erroneous to assume that career breaks taken by women can be used as a tool to underrate the value of work done by them. Despite this, only 47% were convinced that motherhood and pregnancy do not restrict women from working on par with men. While 29% of the respondents were unsure about this, the rest accepted that pregnancy and motherhood as forces that reinforce the gender roles assigned to women, echoing the claims of many feminists.
4. Similarly, while 46% of the respondents assured of the absence of a gender pay gap within the family, 36% admitted to inequality in the wages between men and women of their family, while 18% accepted its possibility.

Is there a Gender Pay Gap within Family?

• YES [46%] • NO [36%] • MAYBE [27%]



5. While 76 respondents were satisfied with their organizations for increasing gender diversity at their workplace, 52 believed that more efforts need to be taken to ensure proper representation while 17 felt that doing less would suffice.

How well are their organisations conducting promotions based on individual merit?

• Extremely well [29%] • Very well [42%]
• Somewhat well [22%] • Not too well [7%]



6. In terms of women having the same opportunities as men in advancing their career; despite 26% affirming that women have more opportunities than men in their workplace and 26% believing that opportunities presented to women were less, a majority of 48% renewed hopes by stating that women have the same opportunities as men.

Do women have more, fewer or the same opportunities to advance career in their organisation as men ?

● More[26%] ● Less[26%] ● Same [48%]



Comments and Way Forward

A holistic look at the survey suggests a pro-women attitude. The survey implies out how constructively the respondents have put up the concern of gender discrimination in various spheres and career gaps taken by women (due to maternity) do not justify a gender-based pay disparity.

On the brighter side, we observe an attitudinal change where film industries are coming up with women-centric movies. Cooperative banks and SHGs have specifically encouraged female-led small-scale industries and entrepreneurship opportunities. The Indian military forces have started to recruit women in IAF and issue an order for female inclusion in Permanent Commission in Army. Women in politics have proved their might and skills, breaking the taboos fearlessly.

However, this behavioural change is delayed and gradual. A woman now has to jumble with household chores and a profession that restricts her ability to think for herself and be a businesswoman. Indian Army restricts women to be a part of combat roles unlike the USA, Israel, Germany, France and Canada, and so on, who have women in combat. Hence, the recruitment of combatants in the army can be on a merit basis, irrespective of gender. It will allow women to enter combat roles after proving their physical capability. The workplace should be made a safe space with adequate regulations and encouragements for upward mobility of women of all social strata in their professional spheres. More sensitization programmes and skill development should be taken to empower women of their rights and abilities. There are numerous rights and acts by the government of India which explicitly states "equal pay of equal work". They promote and safeguard women in the workplace.

Rights and Laws by Government for equal pay for equal work

- ❖ 'Equal Pay for Equal Work for both men and women, and 'Right to Work' through Article 39(d) and 41 respectively are part of **DPSP**.
- ❖ **Interpretation of Article 14, 15 and 16**, which ensures the fundamental rights of equality before the law, protection against discrimination and equality in public employment, respectively intends no discrimination in salary for similar work.
- ❖ The **Equality Act of 2010** gives a right to equal pay between women and men for a similar sort of job.
- ❖ The Equal Remuneration Act 1976 (ERA), legislation in India dealing with equal pay for equal work for men and women, was repealed in August 2019 and replaced by the **Code on Wages 2019(Code)**. The replacement was an attempt to fill the crucial gaps in ERA, 1976.
- ❖ **Workmen's Compensation Act** provides proper financial protection to workers and his/her dependent in case of any accidental injury. Certain classes of employers pay compensation. A woman worker can be subject to exploitation while bargaining. This act is to avoid discrimination against female workers.
- ❖ India is a signatory to the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966**. Thus 'equal pay for equal work' is a mandatory right vested in every employee, whether in a temporary or permanent work setting, according to SC.

Conclusion

Interestingly, in Iceland, the Gender Equality Act requires companies and government agencies to employ at least 25 employees to obtain certification of their equal pay system. Similar policies can be adopted to reduce pay disparity between men and women. According to IWPR, at the current rate at which the wage gap is closing, men and women will not reach gender parity even by 2059. Thus it is high time to pull up the socks and work in a direction which facilitates gender equality in wages. The survey conducted by Policy Centre & Gender lab was an attempt to unveil gender discrimination primarily in getting salaries for similar job along with another organizational set-up to make the masses aware of policies that India has adopted to mitigate the problem. However, much still remains to be done!

