

An Analysis of Gender Discrimination and Horizontal Hostility among Working Women in Pakistan

Authors : Nadia Noor, Farida Faisal

Abstract : Horizontal hostility has been identified as a special type of workplace violence and refers to the aggressive behavior inflicted by women towards other women due to gender issues or towards minority group members due to minority issues. Many women, while they want eagerly to succeed and invest invigorated efforts to achieve success, harbor negative feelings for other women to succeed in their career. This phenomenon has been known as Horizontal Violence, Horizontal Hostility, Lateral Violence, Indirect Aggression, or The Tall Poppy Syndrome in Australian culture. Tall Poppy is referred to as a visibly successful individual who attracts envy or hostility due to distinctive characteristics. Therefore, horizontal hostility provides theoretical foundation to examine fierce competition among females than males for their limited access to top level management positions. In Pakistan, gender discrimination persists due to male dominance in the society and women do not enjoy basic equality rights in all aspects of life. They are oppressed at social and organizational level. As Government has been trying to enhance women participation through providing more employment opportunities, provision of peaceful workplace is mandatory that will enable aspiring females to achieve objectives of career success. This research study will help to understand antecedents, dimensions and outcomes of horizontal hostility that hinder career success of competitive females. The present paper is a review paper and various forms of horizontal hostility have been discussed in detail. Different psychological and organizational level drivers of horizontal hostility have been explored through literature. Psychological drivers include oppression, lack of empowerment, learned helplessness and low self-esteem. Organizational level drivers include sticky floor, glass ceiling, toxic work environment and leadership role. Horizontal hostility among working women results in psychological and physical outcomes including stress, low motivation, poor job performance and intention to leave. The study recommends provision of healthy and peaceful work environment that will enable competent women to achieve objectives of career success. In this regard, concrete actions and effective steps are required to promote gender equality at social and organizational level. The need is to ensure the enforcement of legal frameworks by government agencies in order to provide healthy working environment to women by reducing harassment and violence against them. Organizations must eradicate drivers of horizontal hostility and provide women peaceful work environment. In order to develop coping skills, training and mentoring must be provided to them.

Keywords : gender discrimination, glass ceiling, horizontal hostility, oppression

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