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GENDER AND GROWTH

Women Redefining
Professional Boundaries



Dr. Baseerat Fatima | Dr. Sadaf Khan
Dr. Kamini Vishwakarma

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GENDER AND GROWTH

Women Redefining Professional Boundaries



Gender and Growth: Women Redefining Professional Boundaries

Editors

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Dr. Sadaf Khan

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Chapters</i>	<i>Chapters Particulars</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
1.	Women in Political Leadership: Representation, Challenges and the Impact of Female Leaders in the Era of Globalisation <i>Dr. Seema Siddiqui & Dr. Aijaz Husain</i>	1
2.	Dismantling Workplace Gender Inequality in India: A Human Rights and Legal Perspectives <i>Dr. Mirza Juned Beg & Mohd. Sufiyan Kha</i>	10
3.	Motherhood Penalty and Women's Career Trajectories: Challenges and Solutions in the Workplace <i>Dr Suman Vimal & Mr. Mayur Anand</i>	30
4.	Balancing Career and Childcare: Women's Workplace Struggles <i>Dr. Syedah Fatima Zahara Jafri</i>	42
5.	Gender Inequality at Work: A Legal Study of Wage Gap, Leadership Exclusion and Sexual Harassment -in the Context of Viksit Bharat 2047 <i>Dr. Pradeep Kumar & Adv. Prateek Kumar Sharma</i>	63
6.	Women-Centric Laws and Their Impact on Women's Professional Advancement in India <i>Dr. Anita Ladha</i>	89
7.	Pink Heels, Power Suits: Women, Leadership and the Negotiation of Authentic Identity at Work <i>Ms.Swati Joshi & Dr. Gaurav Gupta</i>	99
8.	Constitutional Framework and Contemporary Challenges to Gender Equality in Professional Spaces <i>Dr. Mohd Talib Ather Ansari & Dr. Bushra Farat Ansari</i>	110
9.	Redefining Safety: Strategies for Combating Workplace Harassment and Sexual Misconduct <i>Dr. Kirti Prajapati</i>	121

10.	Rights on Paper, Realities at Work: A Legal Perspective on Women's Professional Advancement <i>Dr. Wasim Ahmad</i>	132
11.	Gender Equality in Professional Spaces: Constitutional Guarantees, Workplace Justice and Women's Leadership in Contemporary India <i>Dr. Yasharth Gautam & Ms. Sunny Kannojiya</i>	149
12.	Gendered Scripts at Work: Stereotypes, Self-Presentation, and Women's Professional Identity in India <i>Mr. Abhishek Raj & Ms. Ayushi Srivastava</i>	162
13.	Significance of Aligning Workplace Reforms with Global Standards: A Critical Legal Analysis of the POSH Act, Equal Remuneration Act, and Diversity Policies in India <i>Mr. Rajesh Kumar Vishwakarma & Adv. Lovely Yadav</i>	172
14.	Towards Gender-Neutral Workplace in India: Legal Framework, strategies and Challenges <i>Mr. Rakesh Kumar Jaiswal & Adv. Niharika Dwivedi</i>	182
15.	Power Dynamics and the ICC: Structural Limitations of the POSH Act <i>Mr. Faiz Osmani</i>	197
16.	Women's Leadership in the Digital Age: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Opportunities, Cyber Challenges, and Regulatory Frameworks in India <i>Mr. Ram Kumar & Adv. Narendra Kumar</i>	206
17.	Gender Inequality in the Workplace-Addressing the Wage Gap and Limited Representation of Women in Leadership Positions <i>Ms. Reshma Hayat</i>	226
18.	The Fragmented Ceiling: A Comparative Analysis of Women's Political Leadership and Structural Resistance <i>Ms. Komal Aggarwal & Dr. Syedah Fatima Zahara Jafri</i>	250



Pink Heels, Power Suits: Women, Leadership and the Negotiation of Authentic Identity at Work

Swati Joshi & Dr. Gaurav Gupta***

ABSTRACT

The recent upswing in the female Labour Force Participation Rate in India that has risen to 41.7% against 23.3% points to an important milestone but reveals a critical authenticity vacuum wherein women have to negotiate their identity between feminine expression and masculine professional figures. This chapter discusses the critical role of workplace authenticity, and insisting women to make a decision between Pink Heels and Power Suit is not only a social problem but also a violation of the Right to Dignity as provided in Article 21 of the Constitution. The research gap is that the existing Indian laws are not sufficient because the POSH Act 2013 only concerns overt harassment but not the identity tax and micro-aggression that marginalize feminine qualities. This research employs a legal-empirical approach to analyzing Indian Constitutional provisions (Arts. 14& 16) and international G20 standards, at 25% of board positions as compared to 12.2 in India. The most significant insights are that there is a dual-blind jurisprudence: women are commonly considered incompetent when they look too female, and aggressive when they incline towards masculine professional expectations. These stereotypes form a glass ceiling which cannot be broken by statistics. Finally, the chapter suggests a drastic legislative change, suggesting that the 2020 Labour Codes should be changed to enable gender expression as a protected factor. India can achieve by shifting towards a proactive identity-protection model rather than a reactive model of safety that its surging number of female workers will be able to perform well, without losing their true selves and eventually the high goal of 70% of total Labour Force Participation Rate.

KEYWORDS: *Authenticity Tax, Constitutional Dignity, Gender Expression, Identity-Based Discrimination, Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), POSH Act 2013.*

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of women in the professional field in India used to be a trickle, but it has now turned into a tidal wave. According to recent statistics, the female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in India has increased tremendously since some time ago when there was 23.3% in 2017-18 to 41.7% in 2023-24. This change has seen millions of women become claimants to offices and boardrooms in the country. But as these figures increase, a less conspicuous battle is brewing below

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